

KATRINA

RECOVERY AND REVIVAL
10 YEARS LATER BY TIM LAYDEN P. 52

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Sports Illustrated

ALL EYES ON SERENA

THE SLAM

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P. 22

**WAIT
TILL NEXT
THIS YEAR**

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BRING JOY TO
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**BRADY VS.
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THE WINNER IS...
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BY GREG A. BEDARD
P. 26

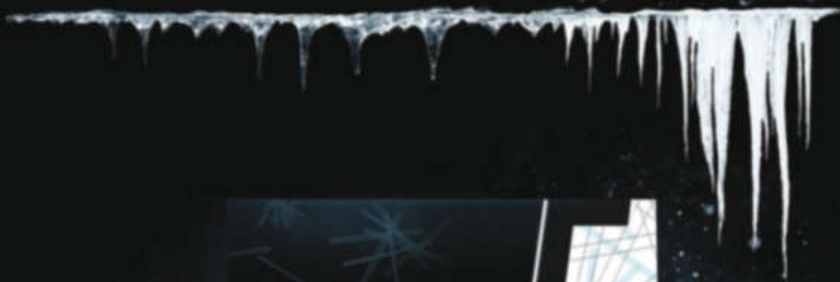


AT THE U.S. OPEN
SERENA WILLIAMS CAN
BECOME THE FIRST
PLAYER IN 27 YEARS
TO SWEEP ALL FOUR
TENNIS MAJORS

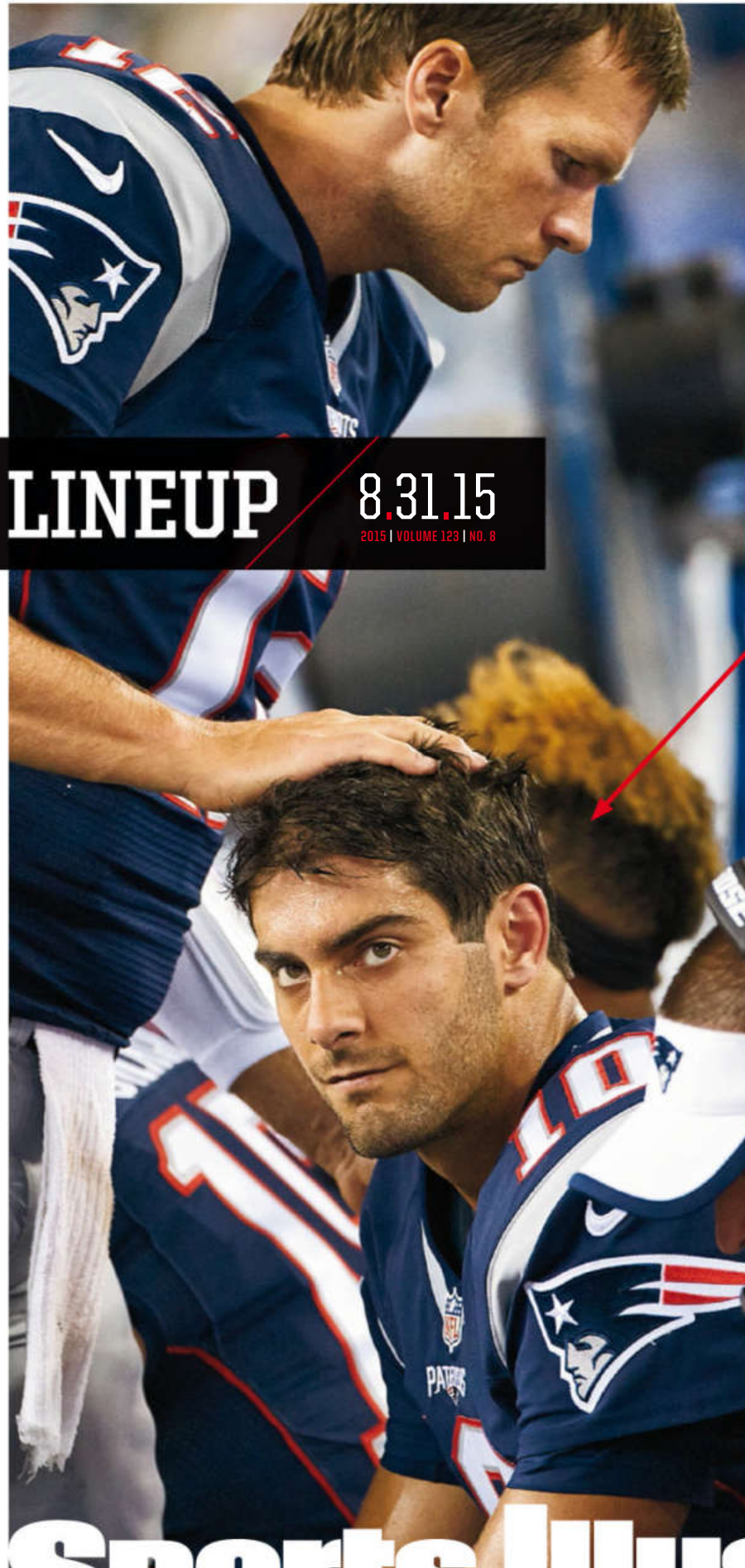


5 ASCENT GUM

AN INTENSIFYING WINTERMINT



STIMULATE YOUR SENSES

A large background photograph of Tom Brady in a New England Patriots jersey, looking down. Another player's head is visible in the foreground, looking up at Brady. A red arrow points from the '32 The Cubs' section to the player in the foreground.

LINEUP

8.31.15

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SI HAS REGIONAL COVERS THIS WEEK:
Bob Martin/
AELTC (Serena Williams);
Stephen Green (Cubs)

Photograph by
Tim Clayton
For Sports Illustrated

Sports Illustrated



"I think there is a long way to go for us to live up to those guys."

—Matt Harvey

to be played for us to turn things around.

MG: *High praise from Hall of Famer John Smoltz, who said that you and the Mets' pitching staff have more talent than the 1990 Braves' rotation. What do you think when you hear yourself compared with a rotation that included two eventual Hall of Famers?*

MH: I think there is a long way to go for us to live up to those guys. Growing up and being able to watch those guys do what they did in Atlanta was great. For us, we definitely keep our heads down and keep our focus. But just to hear John Smoltz even say something like that—a guy who just happens to be someone I loved watching when I was growing up more than anybody—it keeps that drive going even more. □

For more of Harvey's interview, plus the SI Now archive, go to SI.com/sinow

MATT HARVEY The Mets' 26-year-old ace, who's 11-7 after sitting out 2014 due to Tommy John surgery, discusses his return to the mound and being part of a rotation compared with one of the greatest ever.

MAGGIE GRAY: *How was it to bounce back after surgery on your right elbow?*

MATT HARVEY: There were a lot of ups and downs. First, going through such an amazing rehab process, feeling great . . . things were really easy and there were no setbacks, you feel good. Then you come back and get into the season, get on the mound and start

adding up some innings and try to get used to being out there every fifth day. That was a little tough. There were definitely some times there when things didn't feel all that great: soreness, fatigue. But as the season goes on, you have to stay focused and realize that it's a long haul. As much as those times aren't fun, you know there's much more baseball that has

TUNE IN



▶ **EPISODE: AUG. 17**

Will Jason Day add to his majors collection after winning the PGA Championship?



▶ **EPISODE: AUG. 18**

Did Bills wide receiver Percy Harvin expose problems within the Seahawks' locker room?



▶ **EPISODE: AUG. 19**

Why, even after a year off, Adrian Peterson is the top fantasy running back.



▶ **EPISODE: AUG. 20**

The team that's most likely to snatch the American League's second wild-card spot? The Rangers!

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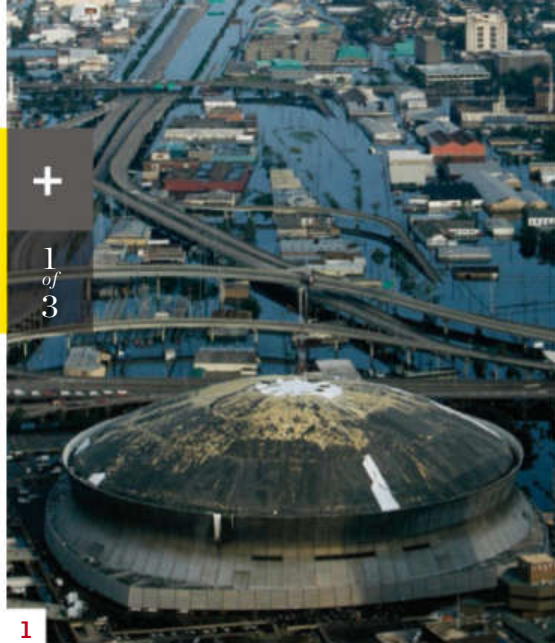


Leading Off

Ruin and Rebirth

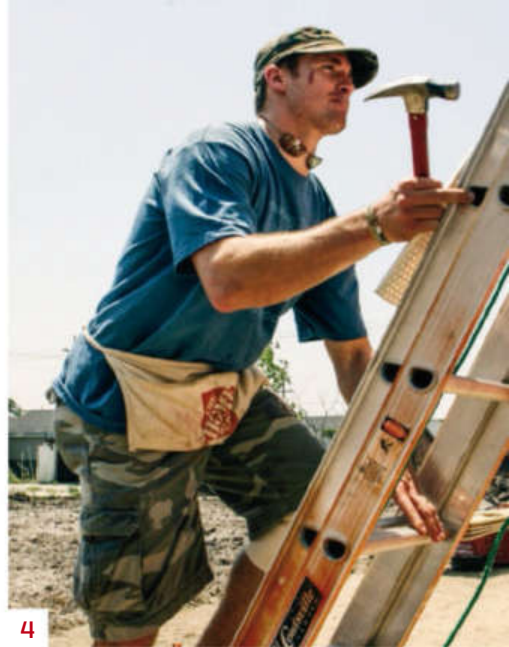
■ It was 10 years ago this Saturday that Hurricane Katrina barreled ashore in New Orleans, severely damaging and forever altering one of America's great cities. This week is a time for reflection—on the lives lost in the storm and in its aftermath, and also on the stories of hope, strength and kindness that revealed themselves as New Orleans rebuilt (page 52). It's a time too to recall the ways large and small that the sports community helped that recovery. [1] The storm-ravaged roof of the Superdome. [2, 3, 4] Over several years, athletes such as Joe Horn, the Manning brothers and Drew Brees pitched into the recovery effort. [5] On Sept. 25, 2006, a key benchmark in the city's revival: the first Saints game at the Superdome since the storm.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
SMILEY N. POOL/DALLAS
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(DOME); BILL BAPTIST
FOR SI (HORN); ROBERT
SCHEER/INDIANAPOLIS
STAR (MANNINGS); BILL
HABER/AP (BREES); BOB
ROSATO FOR SI (SAINTS)

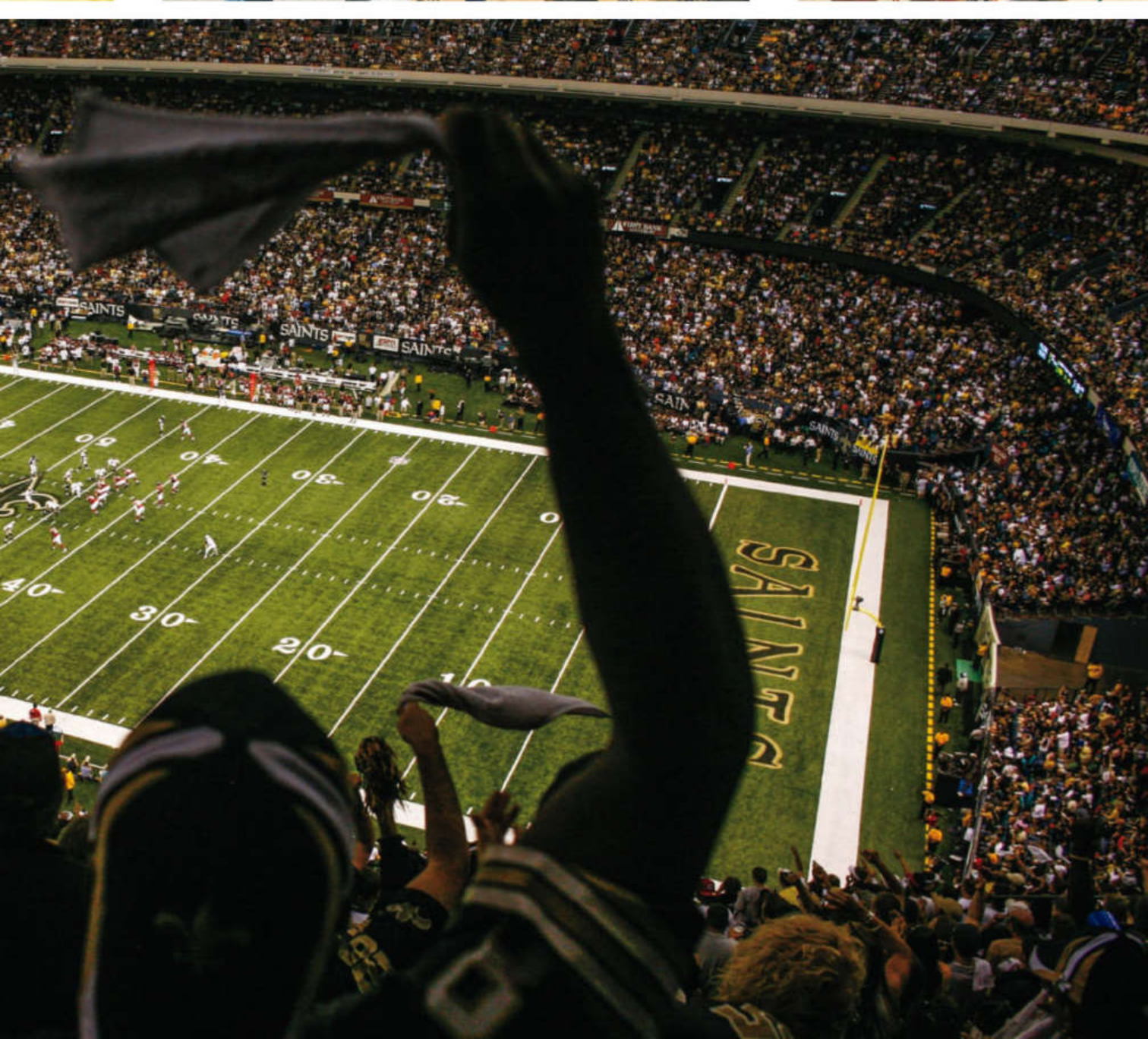




3



4





Leading
Off

+

2
of
3

Not So Fast, Justin

■ Usain Bolt of Jamaica leaned in to take the 100-meter dash at the world championships in Beijing on Sunday in 9.79, nipping the U.S.'s Justin Gatlin (far left) by .01 of a second. Gatlin, who had won 10 races after serving a four-year suspension for doping, led with 20 meters to go, but overstrided. The 29-year-old Bolt, who had been battling a back injury, stayed upright, pushed his chest forward and claimed his ninth world title.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
VICTOR FRAILE
FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED







**Leading
Off**

+

3
of
3



A Fine One to Talc

■ Astros righthander Mike Fiers endured a powder outage after no-hitting the Dodgers last Friday in Houston. Acquired from the Brewers at the trade deadline, the 30-year-old Fiers, who had never pitched into the ninth inning as a starter during his five major league seasons, struck out Justin Turner with his 134th pitch for a 3-0 win. Fiers fanned 10 and walked three, retiring the last 21 batters he faced.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
ERIK WILLIAMS
CAL SPORT MEDIA

INSET:
TROY TAORMINA
USA TODAY SPORTS





INBOX

FOR AUG. 17, 2015



Frank Gifford was one of my childhood heroes. He always looked like an idol, whether he was running sweeps around end or just standing on the sideline. As a broadcaster, his description of skier Franz Klammer's gold-medal-winning downhill run at the 1976 Olympics perfectly captured the drama of the moment.

John Deppen
North Haven, Conn.

While I enjoyed Tim Layden's tribute to Gifford, I did raise an eyebrow at his description of Don Meredith as cornpone. It felt derogatory. As the perfect foil to Howard Cosell, Meredith was folksy and unpretentious, but every bit as insightful.

Paul Welvang, Edina, Minn.



As a Diamondbacks fan, I thoroughly enjoyed Ben Reiter's article on first baseman Paul Goldschmidt. While you were right to say that he is almost unknown to the public, it didn't help that your photos showed him only from the back or at a distance. How about a close-up?

Gary Sumner, Towanda, Pa.



FROM THE EDITOR

Many of our readers wrote in to inquire about the lack of Goldschmidt close-ups. Upon further review, we tend to agree. So here's a picture of Goldschmidt taking a selfie.



COVER

Although we've heard stories similar to Antonio Brown's before, they never cease to inspire. It's incredible how a combination of fortuitous moments, hard work and a little support can lift one out of poverty and on to the American Dream.

Christian Milord
Fullerton, Calif.

PAGE 16

SCORECARD

Reading about how USA Track & Field will not allow middle distance runner Nick Symmonds to compete for the U.S. team at the world championships because he wouldn't wear Nike gear at all times made me think I had stumbled upon your Sign of the Apocalypse.

Brian Kass
Springfield, N.J.

PAGE 64



POINT AFTER

I enjoyed **Michael Rosenberg's** column on minor league home run king Mike Hessman. Given the Tigers' dismal season, you would think they would have called him up by now.

Bill Finch
Wayland, Mass.

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Edited by JIM GORANT + TED KEITH

SCORECARD

Hot and Bothered

A Pro Bowl tight end reveals what causes the training camp skirmishes that have been so common this summer

BY GREG OLSEN

AS TOLD TO EMILY KAPLAN

IN THE NFL, training camp is the most wonderful time of year. It's a time for optimism and for bonding with your teammates. For three weeks my team, the Panthers, set up shop at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C. We returned to our college days of eating in the cafeteria and hanging out in common rooms. We focused solely on the sport we love after a six-month absence.

The logical question, then: If training camp is so wonderful, why are so many NFL players getting into fights? From the Cowboys' Dez Bryant and Tyler Patmon swinging at each other on the field to IK Enemkpali breaking Jets quarterback Geno Smith's jaw with a locker room punch over a plane ticket,

some of the biggest hits so far have been on guys wearing the same uniform.

One such altercation occurred in our camp. On Aug. 10 cornerback Josh Norman and quarterback Cam Newton got into a scuffle following a Norman interception. It was our seventh day of padded practice in nine days. Fights usually come when guys are exhausted and tired of facing the same players and running the same plays. These conflicts rarely carry over. It's not uncommon to see the same guys who were screaming at each other on the sideline in the afternoon dining together that night.

Another reason for infighting: pride. Players want to prove themselves to their teammates and

coaches. That inherent competitiveness is especially heated when it's offense versus defense. Neither side wants to hear the constant chirping about how it got beat while waiting in line at the salad bar at lunch.

The other type of training camp fight occurs during joint practices. This season it has happened to the Rams and the Cowboys and to the Texans and the Redskins. Generally, every team practices at its own tempo with its own rhythm. Sometimes, when two clubs are thrust together, those styles don't blend quite right. The expectations for a drill are different—are you going full contact or not? Fifty percent effort or 75? If this isn't communicated, there's going to be a problem.



When the Dolphins arrived in our camp for two days last week, Miami coach Joe Philbin and our coach, Ron Rivera, were very clear about their expectations. When going full speed, we were to make sure that both the ballcarrier and the defensive players knew it. They also told us to understand that each team wanted to accomplish something and walk away healthy. We didn't have any incidents.

DAVID T. FOSTER III / THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP (ROCKIE); MOSTAFA FAWZY/GETTY IMAGES (MONEY)

All we want as players is to have a level playing field. We want to know the parameters, have everyone abide by them and see who thrives in competition. This is why you rarely see fights in regular-season practices or games. The expectations are consistent and are communicated as such. But in training camp, things are different, from the schedule to the weather to the number of fringe players looking to stand out

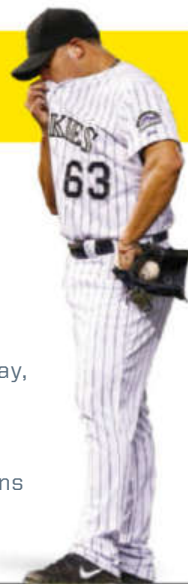
and win a job, all of which can ratchet up the tension.

Before our preseason opener in Buffalo on Aug. 14, I said to linebackers Thomas Davis and Luke Kuechly, "It's nice to finally all be on the same side." They smiled. We were no longer enemies. We were teammates again. Our success wasn't predicated on each other's failure. All we care about is winning the Super Bowl. None of us can argue about that. □

GO FIGURE

14-9

Score of the Rockies' losses to the Mets last Friday and Saturday, making Colorado the first MLB team to ever drop two straight games by that score. The 1934 Red Sox beat the St. Louis Browns and the Chicago White Sox 14-9 in consecutive games.



8 Times Ohio State has been ranked No. 1 in the AP's preseason college football poll, including this year, when the Buckeyes became the first unanimous choice for the top spot. Ohio State has never finished No. 1 after starting the season there.

193

Approximate height, in feet, of the record-setting cliff jump made by **Laso Schaller** from a waterfall in Switzerland last week. The 27-year-old Schaller was in the air for 3.58 seconds and hit the water at more than 75 mph.



\$1 MILLION

Estimated value of a trove of sports cards found last week in an abandoned warehouse in Detroit by a team of urban explorers. Millions of the cards—mostly baseball and hockey cards from the 1980s and '90s—were in unopened crates and in perfect condition.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wrong Approach

A case of jumbled priorities at Baylor

GIVEN THE heightened attention sexual assault on college campuses has received lately, it's reasonable to expect that sports programs would change the way they handle rape accusations against athletes. The news out of Baylor last week indicates that, too often, keeping a star football player on the team remains more important than protecting victims of sexual assault.

Sam Ukwuachu, who had been a freshman All-America defensive end at Boise State three seasons ago, transferred to Baylor in spring 2013 despite a troubling history that reportedly included a domestic violence



incident for which he was dismissed from the team. In October 2013, while Ukwuachu was sitting out as a transfer, he was accused of sexual assault by a player on Baylor's women's soccer team. Last week he was convicted of one count of sexual assault and sentenced to six months in prison, 400 hours of community service and 10 years of probation. Baylor's only official explanation for Ukwuachu's absence from the team had been that he

was taking time to deal with "some issues," as defensive coordinator Phil Bennett put it. As of June, Bennett said he expected Ukwuachu "to be eligible in July."

Since the story was reported in *Texas Monthly*, the focus on the case has centered on the finger-pointing between coaches over what coach Art Briles knew when Ukwuachu transferred. While important in determining Baylor's liability in putting female students at risk, this

Warning Signs

Ukwuachu was welcomed at Baylor despite an alleged history of violent behavior at Boise State.

should not be allowed to obscure the shortcomings of Baylor's response to the sexual assault. The school did not remove Ukwuachu from the classes and tutoring sessions he shared with the victim; the woman transferred from Baylor after the 2013–14 academic year. The team seems to have viewed the assault as an inconvenience, a pothole on Baylor's road to reaching the College Football Playoff. Even after Ukwuachu's indictment, he was still part of the team's plans.

Baylor's actions are all too common. Until institutions recognize sexual assault as a serious crime, they must try to prevent, rather than a public relations disaster to be brushed under the rug, true progress on this front will remain excruciatingly slow.

—Emma Span



Giants Among Men

Ira Berkow

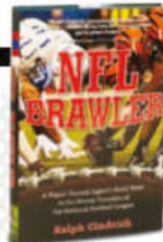
Collected columns of the Pulitzer-winning *New York Times* writer recall 40 years of Giants, from Y.A. to L.T. and beyond. #bigblue



The Oval World

Tony Collins

A rugby bible by a history prof who knows how to tell a story; in 560 pages it will take you from origins to today, novice to expert. #giveblood



NFL Brawler

Ralph Cindrich

The NFL's first player turned agent names and calls people names in an earthy, behind-the-scenes tour of his career. #ironcity



The Ugly Game

Heidi Blake and Jonathan Calvert

Leaked documents and emails and deep reporting blow up Qatar's '22 bid and expose FIFA's bottomless pit of corruption. #mttheblatter



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TRACK AND FIELD

+
The Race Goes On

Usain Bolt outsprinted Justin Gatlin in Beijing, but the sport still has a crisis to run down

HERE IS WHAT

Usain Bolt did on Sunday night at the Birds Nest Olympic Stadium in Beijing (where, at the 2008 Olympics, he established himself as an outsized, hyperfast cartoon superhero): He ran his fastest 100 meters (9.79 seconds) in what had been a desultory season, winning the world championship by .01 over Justin Gatlin of the U.S., whose performances over the last two years had made him a solid favorite in the race. Bolt, 29, won

his fifth global 100-meter title (two Olympics, three worlds) in seven years to go with three world records, firmly stamping himself as not only the greatest pure sprinter in history but also as the consummate big-stage performer, whose pre- and postrace theatrics mask his excellence.

Here is what Bolt did *not* do Sunday night at the Birds Nest: rescue the sport of track and field from the scourge of PED use.

The race had been one of the most anticipated sprint showdowns in history. Bolt

has struggled this season, while Gatlin, at age 33, has been running the fastest times of his life. But also: Gatlin was suspended for doping from 2006 through '10, while Bolt has never tested positive, leading the track world to frame the matchup as a battle of evil vs. good. When the race ended, British world marathon record holder Paula Radcliffe melodramatically tweeted, "... and breathe!"

It's all hyperventilating. Gatlin is called a two-time drug loser, when one of his positives was 14 years ago for Adderall, which he had taken since he was a boy for ADD. His second bust, for testosterone or its precursors in 2006, was legitimate, but Gatlin has denied long-term steroid usage and sat out four years in the prime of his sprinting (and earning) career as punishment.

The sport is drowning in drug revelations. Last month the IAAF, track and field's governing body, confirmed that 28 athletes from the '05 and '07 worlds had produced positive drug tests through retesting with enhanced methods.

In the battle between clean and dirty, Bolt's victory over Gatlin is symbolic at best. (Who knows if Gatlin is clean now? Or if Bolt truly is?) It was a terrific footrace, nothing more. They were scheduled to face off again Thursday night in the 200. That race—no matter how terrific—can't decide the sport's future, either.

—Tim Layden

**SIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE**

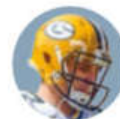
Texans center **Ben Jones** said he drank a cup of a teammate's urine on a bet for an undisclosed amount of money during a drug-testing session.

Davis Love III

Victory at Wyndham Championship makes 51-year-old the third-oldest PGA Tour winner ever, proving again that true Love is ageless.



HOT ▲
NOT ▼

**Jordy Nelson**

Packers' Pro Bowl wideout blows out right knee and is out for season, denting Green Bay's title hopes. Tundra immediately freezes over.



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GOT TO BE ONE
OF THE WORST
PAINS EVER.”**

Kevin Ware

Georgia State guard and former Louisville player who suffered a gruesome fracture of his right tibia during the Cardinals' 2013 Elite Eight win over Duke.



Alex Edmondson | *Simpsonville, S.C.* | *Baseball*

Alex, an eighth-grader at Mauldin Middle School, threw a no-hitter to lead the Taylors [S.C.] Northwood Little League team past Mechanicsville [Va.] National 7-0 for the Southeast Region title. He threw another no-hitter in a 7-1 win over New England champs Cranston [R.I.] Western for the first victory ever by a South Carolina team in the Little League World Series.



Samantha (Sammy) Watson | *Rochester, N.Y.* | *Track*

Sammy, a junior at Rush-Henrietta High, ran a personal best 2:03.54 to win the 800 meters at the world youth championships in Cali, Colombia. She also anchored the U.S.'s winning 1,600 coed relay. The New York Gatorade track athlete of the year, Sammy set a meet record in the 400 [52.69] and won the 1,500 [4:25.24] at the state championship in June.



Spencer Lee | *Murrysville, Pa.* | *Wrestling*

Spencer, a junior at Franklin Regional High, won gold in the 110-pound weight class at freestyle junior worlds in Salvador, Brazil, with a 10-0 technical-fall victory over reigning cadet [ages 15-16] world champion Ali Reza Goodarzi of Iran. The match took 48 seconds. Spencer is a two-time Class AAA Pennsylvania champion.

FACES IN THE CROWD

Edited by ALEXANDRA FENWICK



Reena Sulkar | *Barrington Hills, Ill.* | *Golf*

Reena, a junior at Barrington High, shot an eight-over 152 to win the *Golfweek* Midwest Junior Invitational at Cog Hill Golf Club in Lemont, Ill., in July by seven strokes. Two weeks later she opened her varsity season with a school-record 66 at the par-71 Bonnie Dundee Golf Club in Carpentersville, leading the Fillies to the Barrington Invitational title.



Tyler Maizels | *Parkton, Md.* | *Weightlifting*

Tyler, a senior at Hereford High, won his third AAU Junior Olympic title in Hampton Roads, Va. In the 85-kg weight class he snatched 105 kg, clean-and-jerked 137 and totaled 242—each an American and world record—to earn best lifter honors. Tyler will compete at the AAU world championships in Las Vegas next month.



Caroline Gute | *Dublin, Ohio* | *Equestrian*

Caroline, a junior at Coffman High, took first in the reining event at the Interscholastic Equestrian Association western nationals in Oklahoma City to beat out 12 riders for the Champion Western Rider title in the varsity open division. A day later she won top rider honors at the National Reining Horse Youth Association's open reining high school final.

Nominate Now ▼

To submit a candidate for Faces in the Crowd, go to SI.com/faces. For more on outstanding amateur athletes, follow @SI_Faces on Twitter.



JUST MY TYPE

→ Interview by **DAN PATRICK**

DAN PATRICK: *What's the fastest you went in the win last Saturday?*

JOEY LOGANO: I think around 140 [mph]. For a half-mile track, that's getting around pretty good. We go faster at other racetracks.

DP: *Jimmie Johnson said you were "damn good."*

JL: Well, that's good. He's pretty damn good himself.

DP: *Was Johnson your idol growing up?*

JL: Jimmie got in a little bit later. Really, Jeff Gordon was my favorite driver. It's cool to race against those guys. When you're seven or eight years old and you're watching your heroes race, you dream you're going to race against them. I pinch myself a lot because I still think of when I was watching them on TV.

DP: *When did you first meet Jeff Gordon?*

JL: I met him in Loudon, New Hampshire, when I was eight or nine.

DP: *Did you take a picture with him?*

JL: Yep, picture and autograph.

DP: *Isn't that weird?*

JL: It is weird. A lot of the younger drivers tell Jeff that [they idolized him] when they were young. I think it makes him feel old. I don't know if he likes it so much.

DP: *How do you know*



JOEY LOGANO

TROPHY HUNTER

The 25-year-old NASCAR driver won at Bristol Motor Speedway last Saturday—his third victory of the season—and is second in the Sprint Cup Chase standings.

when a kid is going to make a good driver?

JL: It's hard to say. When you look at hockey or baseball you can tell when a kid is naturally gifted pretty early. But there are also late bloomers. In pro sports, especially racing, natural talent might get you to the top level, but it won't win you races or games.

DP: *If I walked into your house, would I know what you do for a living?*

JL: You would know, believe me. I have trophies everywhere.

DP: *That's good to have enough trophies.*

JL: Every morning I walk by my [2015] Daytona 500 trophy and make sure I see that thing.

DP: *Is there a time when conflicts seem to be more than just racing and more personal?*

JL: Of course. [Laughs.] Usually you see something after the race when that happens. We race the same guys every week—eventually you run into each other. Most of the time you can look back at a conflict and say that's just racing, but you still ask yourself, Would I do the same thing?

DP: *No fights this year.*

JL: I'm good, man. We're just winning races. I'm trying to fly under the radar.

DP: *You're not going to stay under the radar winning races.*

JL: That's all right with me.

GUEST SHOTS SAY WHAT?



NBA MVP
Stephen Curry had trouble

enjoying a round of golf with President Obama. "I knew there'd be 25 Secret Service agents with sniper guns," the Warriors' guard said. "That's pretty nerve-racking. What if I hit an errant tee shot that hit him in the back of the head?" ... *Rolling Stone* contributor

Matt Taibbi, a lifelong New England sports fan, described Deflategate's effect



on Patriots fans: "They're like a

late-stage Lenny Bruce at this point. They're completely obsessed with the injustice of it all and getting overweight and losing their sense of humor." ... I asked Seahawks QB **Russell**



Wilson which was his best off-

season acquisition: tight end Jimmy Graham or girlfriend Ciara? "I'll take both of them," Wilson said. "I have Jimmy Graham, who's 6' 7" and runs a 4.5. And I have Ciara, who can dance and sing with the best of them."

The Case for . . .

Chase in Cooperstown

BY JAY JAFFE

■ WHEN RIGHT-ANKLE inflammation forced then Phillies second baseman Chase Utley to the disabled list on June 23, he carried MLB worsts in batting average (.179) and OPS+ (48), raising doubts about whether his career—and his Hall of Fame chances—were over. Yet while his traditional career numbers would seem to make Utley unworthy of a spot in Cooperstown, the advanced metrics suggest the 36-year-old second baseman has already done enough to earn enshrinement.

After returning from a 37-game absence, Utley (*right*) also proved he's far from finished, going on a 15-for-31 binge that generated widespread interest among contending teams with suboptimal second base situations. On Aug. 19 the Dodgers acquired Utley for two minor leaguers (superutilityman Darnell Sweeney and righty John Richy), ending his 13-season run in Philadelphia.

Through Sunday, Utley has 1,625 hits, 233 home runs, 142 steals and a .282/.366/.481 batting line, plus six All-Star selections, and he played a pivotal role in the Phillies' five straight postseason appearances from 2007 to '11. Those counting stats are suppressed in part because Utley, blocked at second base by Placido Polanco, didn't play regularly until age 26. And while he's glaringly short of



awards, having won neither an MVP nor a Gold Glove, Utley was frequently a strong candidate for both.

From 2005 to '10, Utley led NL second basemen in Defensive Runs Saved and Ultimate Zone Rating four times apiece; none of the Gold Glovers at the position led in the years that they won. His overall contributions at bat, with the glove and on the bases as measured by Wins Above Replacement ranked him among the NL's three most valuable position players every year from 2005 to '09, yet his highest finish in NL MVP voting was seventh.

The advanced stats also paint a more favorable picture of his Cooperstown chances. My JAWS (Jaffe WAR Score) system attempts to identify worthy candidates by comparing each to the average Hall of Famer at his position. This is done

by calculating the average of a player's career WAR and his peak total (defined as a player's best seven seasons). By that formula Utley rates as the 12th-best second baseman in history, two spots ahead of 2015 inductee Craig Biggio. Utley's 49.1 peak WAR is eighth among all second basemen, 4.7 wins above the average Hall second-sacker's 44.4; as with other short-career Hall of Famers such as Hank Greenberg and Ralph Kiner, that alone could justify enshrinement. Because Utley's 61.5 career WAR is 7.8 behind the average Hall of Fame second baseman's, his 55.3 JAWS is still a bit short of the 56.9 average of those 20 already enshrined at the position. But his recent rebound suggests that score can yet improve.

Still, Utley faces an uphill climb. Neither the BBWAA voters nor the various iterations of the Veterans Committee have elected any post-1960 position player who had fewer than 2,000 hits. Hall voters have long underrated candidates for whom OBP and defense form a crucial part of their value, such as Ron Santo (seventh in JAWS among third basemen) and Bobby Grich (seventh among second basemen, the highest outside the Hall).

It took 37 years after his retirement—and one year after his death—for Santo to be elected, in 2011, and Grich, 66, is still waiting for his Hall call. Utley should be helped by an evolving electorate that better understands DRS, UZR, WAR and JAWS. Still, continuing his resurgence for another season or two would help convince the remaining skeptics of what should already be clear: Chase Utley is a Hall of Famer. □

+
12th

Utley's ranking among 2B in MLB history, according to JAWS

6
All-Star selections in his 11 full seasons

0
Post-1960 position players with fewer than 2,000 hits elected to the Hall

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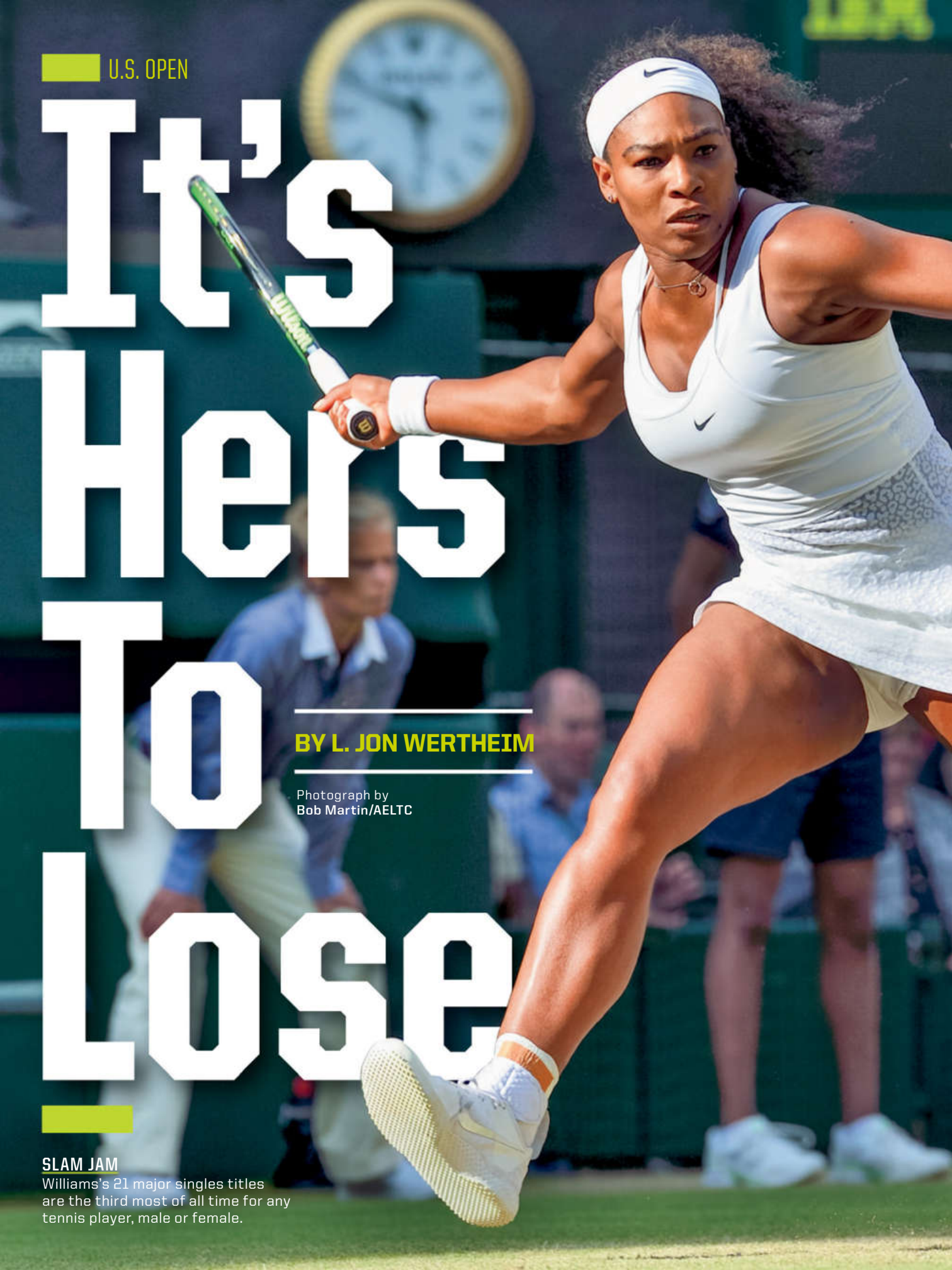
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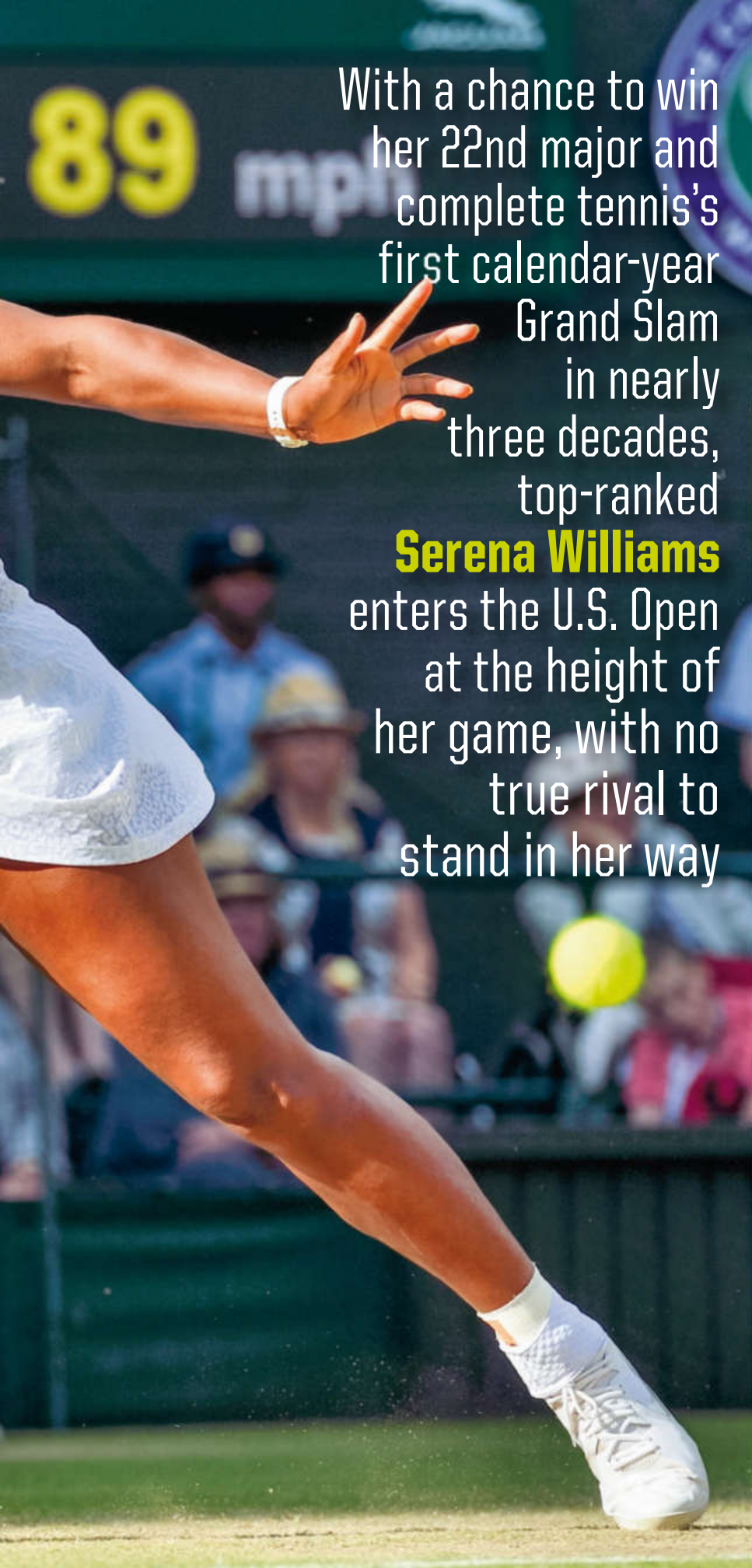
It's Hers To Lose

BY L. JON WERTHEIM

Photograph by
Bob Martin/AELTC

SLAM JAM

Williams's 21 major singles titles are the third most of all time for any tennis player, male or female.



With a chance to win
her 22nd major and
complete tennis's
first calendar-year
Grand Slam
in nearly
three decades,
top-ranked
Serena Williams
enters the U.S. Open
at the height of
her game, with no
true rival to
stand in her way

At the start of this, her 34th year, Serena Williams undertook a bit of self-reflection. She pondered her persistent need to succeed and the sting that—almost two decades into her pro tennis career—still attends her defeats, rare as they are. “Well,” her mother, Oracene Price, suggested offhandedly, “you could always try not losing.”

She has heeded Mom’s advice. Not only is Serena ranked No. 1, but objects in her rearview mirror appear closer than they in fact are. (For perspective: The points gap separating Serena from No. 2 Simona Halep is greater than the points gap between Halep and the lowest-ranked player on the tour.) Serena is turning in the best year of her career, which is saying something. She is also turning in perhaps the best year in modern tennis history—which is saying still more. Her 2015 record encompasses 48 wins and is pocked with only two defeats, neither of which has come at a major event. Having won the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon, she is on the threshold of achieving perhaps the most formidable feat in all of sports.

This summer began with American Pharoah coming to Long Island and winning the Triple Crown. It now ends with Serena coming to a venue seven miles from Belmont Park and trying to finish collecting her sport’s ultimate box set. Starting Monday at the 2015 U.S. Open in Queens, tennis’s queen will be playing for tennis’s elusive Grand Slam.

As is so often the case, tennis does itself no favor in its terminology. *Grand Slam* hardly connotes a historic act. This season more than 70 grand slams have already been belted in major league baseball, including three in one game in a matchup between the Reds and the Brewers in April. Denny’s, that quintessentially unremarkable eatery, has co-

U.S. OPEN

opted the term Grand Slam for its breakfast special. Still, in tennis, a Grand Slam is an extreme rarity. A full 27 years have elapsed since Steffi Graf won the last Grand Slam. On the men's side, 46 years have passed since Rod Laver last achieved the same distinction.

Winning tennis's Grand Slam—or shall we call it the Quadruple Crown?—demands the usual checklist of athletic virtues: sustained excellence. Mental fortitude. Versatility. In other words, winning on four distinct surfaces in four parts of the world. (A match played on Plexicushion-topped asphalt in the scorching heat of Melbourne demands an entirely different skill set from a match played on clay in the spitting rain of Paris.)

Above all, maybe it's just an exercise in focus. In no way diminishing Jordan Spieth's quest for golf's Grand Slam—and acknowledging that he had to beat an entire field over four days, not simply the seven opponents furnished by a winnowing tennis draw—he could shoot a lousy round and still make the cut, putting himself in position to win a major with fine play on Sunday. For Serena? One bad day at the office, one blazingly hot opponent, one niggling injury, one dinner of rancid sushi the night before, and the dance would be over.

Which nearly happened this year. At the French Open, Serena was seldom at her best, pressed to a third set in five of her seven matches.

Let's pause here and note that in a sport known for brief careers, Serena first won the U.S. Open in 1999, when Bill Clinton was President.

At Wimbledon she was a mere game from losing to 59th-ranked Heather Watson, a young Briton. But the rocky moments gave way, inevitably, to *Rocky* moments. Each time, Serena picked herself off the canvas and finished the round strong.

She now comes to New York City to try and finish the job. It's her home Slam. It's an event she's won six times, including each of the last three years. It's the site of the first major she won. (Let's pause here and note that in a sport known for brief careers, Serena first won the U.S. Open in 1999, when Bill Clinton was President.) If she were to win it again, it would be her 22nd career major, tying her with Graf. "It

does feel like everything is lining up perfectly," says Lindsay Davenport, the '98 U.S. Open champ, now a commentator for the Tennis Channel and part-time coach of rising U.S. star Madison Keys. "But what's really lining up is that Serena has been playing at another level this year."

Serena, famously superstitious, has generally avoided discussing her pursuit of history. At Wimbledon in July she went so far as to issue a moratorium on mentions of the Slam. Afterward she indulged the speculation, at least for a few moments. "It's always something I've thought about, a goal way out there," she said. "It would be pretty cool, wouldn't it?"

Better than cool. It would be *grand*. □



Check out the Beyond the Baseline podcast with Jon Wertheim each week for the latest tennis buzz and hot topics at SI.com/podcasts

Who **CAN** Beat Serena?

For Serena Williams to lose her bid for the calendar-year Grand Slam, another player would have to step up and beat her, something that hasn't happened at a major in more than 14 months. While there will be 127 potential candidates for the role of vanquisher, there are few obvious choices. Serena has no rival—no Nadal to her Federer—nor has any one colleague played the burr in her saddle and vexed her. Still, before the making of the U.S. Open draw, here are five potential spoilers. —L.J.W.

ANNA ITAINOVATILLITSOVA

If you've never heard of her, it's for good reason. She doesn't exist. Still, the point is this: When Serena loses at majors, it tends to be against one of the WTA's lesser lights in the early rounds, when Serena's focus can waver and she has little knowledge of the opponent. Once Serena makes it to the second week and "locks in" (her term), you can all but hand her the trophy.

BELINDA BENCIC

The 18-year-old Swiss threw Serena a surprise defeat earlier this month in Toronto. Even if Bencic isn't likely to beat Serena again, she represents the type of player who can threaten her: a future star naive enough to swing away with nothing-to-lose abandon but seasoned and confident enough to know how to close.



WORDS WITH . . . SERENA

Do you still have the capacity to surprise yourself?

Oh, yeah. I've totally surprised myself. I never thought I would win another Serena Slam [four straight majors spread over two seasons, which she first accomplished in 2002–03]. Not even after the ['15] French Open. Especially not at 33.

What's the biggest thing in your off-court life you've had to forsake to get to this point?

I don't have much time to be at home or live a normal life or go anywhere. Sometimes I'm driving and I'll see a pub and think, I'd love to go there. But, *oops*, I can't. Granted, I'm really happy with my life, really excited. But, yeah, I miss my family a lot. I don't get to see them

as much as I'd like to. Those are the things you sacrifice. Hopefully you get a chance to do those things later.

When you take the court, do you feel indestructible?

No, I don't. You would be surprised by how I feel. I feel vulnerable every time I step out there. Every single time. It's just a matter of overcoming those feelings and being the best I can be on that day.

What does Steffi Graf [the last woman to win the calendar-year Grand Slam, in 1988] mean to you?

Oh, gosh, everything. I played her a couple of times, and it was one of



the highlights of my career. You're younger and watching someone as great as her, and you're thinking, I'm never going to play her. Then you're standing out there against her and in awe.

What could stop you in New York?

Me. I'm always one of my biggest competitors. I can stop myself. That's why I try to stay positive on the court and really focused and as calm as I can. Then I have to make sure I don't

HAPPY WARRIOR

For all the hard work and sacrifice it takes to dominate a year-round sport such as tennis, Williams says she really enjoys her life.

have too many "cheat days" and am prepared. Physically I need to make sure I am good. . . . And fear and doubt can stop me too. If I step on the court and am a little nervous or fearful, that's not a good sign.

Does that happen often?

It does. But I embrace it. I bottle it up and I throw that bottle away.

Did you even think about winning a true Grand Slam earlier in your career?

Yeah, when I was younger it was definitely a goal. Now it's become more of a dream, a fable. So we'll see. . . .

ALIZÉ CORNET

Known among peers as the WTA's reigning drama queen, Cornet was remarkably unflappable when she beat Serena three times in 2014, including a takedown in the third round at Wimbledon. Acknowledging that she could not overpower Serena, Cornet outpreiced her instead, and she didn't retreat when the match tightened.



VENUS WILLIAMS

There would be something of a Shakespearean dimension to Big Sister ruining Little Sister's run at history. Serena has beaten Venus in six of their last seven matches, but Venus has won eight of their 17 matches on hard courts. More important, the intrafamily dynamic is so strange and awkward that no result between the two is surprising.



MARIA SHARAPOVA OR VICTORIA AZARENKA

It sounds like a joke, given that Serena owns—and we mean *owns*—these alleged rivals, having prevailed in 18 of 20 matches against Sharapova (*below*) and 17 of 20 against Azarenka. But going strictly by the laws of probability, Serena should lose a match to one of them eventually. In theory.



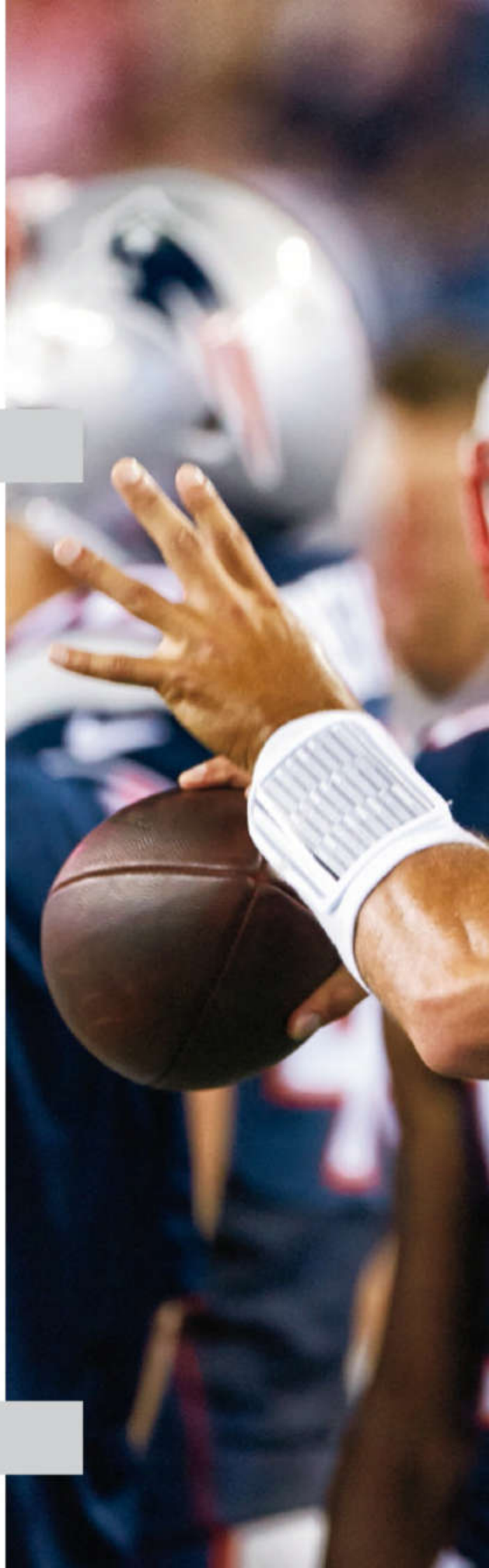
PRO FOOTBALL



Here Are the Keys, **KID**

BY GREG A. BEDARD

Photographs by
Tim Clayton
For Sports Illustrated





IT'S GOING TO
BE ONE WILD
RIDE FOR
JIMMY
GAROPPOLO.
HE ISN'T
THE FIRST
QUARTERBACK
FROM EASTERN
ILLINOIS
PLAYING FOR
BIG STAKES
(TONY ROMO),
BUT THERE'S
A REASON—A
BUNCH OF
THEM—THAT
BILL BELICHICK
DRAFTED HIM
HIGHER THAN
HE HAS ANY
OTHER QB SINCE
HE CAME TO
NEW ENGLAND

GREAT HEIR

Garoppolo's toughness and quick-trigger release made him a natural to follow in Brady's footsteps in the eyes of many, not just the Patriots' front office.

JIMMY GAROPPOLO



WHEN JIMMY GAROPPOLO was announced as the Patriots' second-round selection in the 2014 draft, there were questions, a lot of them: *Who? Why? Huh?* Is Bill Belichick losing it? New England was nine years removed from its last Super Bowl victory and coming off a largely uncompetitive loss to the Broncos in the AFC championship game, and here was Belichick using the highest pick he had ever spent on a quarterback.

From Block Island, R.I., to Caribou, Maine, you could hear a collective grumble about Belichick failing—again—to surround franchise quarterback Tom Brady with enough weapons to break the Super Bowl drought. Instead the Pats had drafted Garo—something (pronounced Gah-ROPP-ah-low) from some small school (Eastern Illinois) that plays in a nothing league (the Ohio Valley Conference of FCS).

But at least one NFL staff understood what the Patriots were doing. “We called it,” Browns coach Mike Pettine said in his office about a month later. “We said, ‘At some point they’re taking Garoppolo. That’s their guy.’ He totally fits their mold. He doesn’t have to be the starter this year, next year, maybe even the year after that, but he’s got plenty of time to grow in that system. To me, it was the perfect pick.”

The 6' 2", 225-pound Garoppolo might not have as much time as Pettine thought. Unless U.S. district court judge Richard M. Berman overturns or reduces the NFL's four-game suspension of Brady for his role in Deflategate, Garoppolo could start the first quarter of the NFL season. Included could be the league's opening game on national TV: Thursday, Sept. 10, at Gillette Stadium against the Steelers. Any slipups could cost the Patriots a postseason bye (they've never advanced to a Super Bowl without one) or home field advantage in the AFC title game (they've lost their last two on the road) or both.

No pressure, Garo-what's-your-name.

A T 23, Garoppolo looks right out of a tall-dark-and-handsome shop: An unnamed teammate taped PRINCE ALADDIN over his locker nameplate last season. He's invariably smiling. He has already mastered the art of dispatching questions in the dullest, Patriots-like fashion. “If we start to look past all these preseason games, things could get ugly,” says Garoppolo. “You’ve just got to take it day by day, not really looking that far ahead, and the rest will take care of itself.”

The son of Tony, an electrician, and Denise, a cook, Garoppolo was raised in a middle-class home in Arlington Heights, Ill., a suburb northwest of Chicago. If Garoppolo has an air of humility, it's partly because older brothers Tony and Mike (Jimmy's one of four) would never have accepted anything less.

Which is not to say that Garoppolo lacks confidence. When he was a sophomore, in 2011, Eastern Illinois trailed Illinois State by a touchdown late in



Learning Curve



the season opener when offensive coordinator Roy Wittke, who had coached Tony Romo at the school, called in his third-and-six play. Garoppolo threw a strike to the one-yard line. Only problem was, it wasn't Wittke's play. Garoppolo called his own.

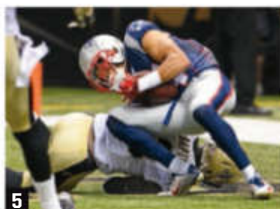
“It was a different type of offense, we had a little more freedom,” Garoppolo says. “I just saw something I liked. Yes, I was confident in the call. You just kind of have to have that as a quarterback.”

Wittke didn't have a problem with the decision, and he endorsed Garoppolo's call on the play that tied the game. Still, that's a lot of conviction for a quarterback starting his ninth college game. “Sure of himself,” says Wittke, who is now the recruiting coordinator at Bowling Green. “But he was never at any time arrogant, never did he in any shape, form or fashion put himself or his stats ahead of the team. He was always a team guy through and through.”

Garoppolo is also, thanks to his days as an outside linebacker at Rolling Meadows High, unafraid to throw his body around. As the clock wound down in the first half of a 2012 game, on third-and-goal at the Tennessee-Martin seven-yard line, Garoppolo couldn't find an open receiver so he scrambled and dived for the goal line as the safety hurtled toward



NFL scouts thought Garoppolo might be a long-term project in a pro system, but his 24-yard touchdown pass against the Saints last Saturday showed his skill and progress. While [1] escaping a sack (and [2] showing off his rare footwork and balance), Garoppolo [3] went through his progressions and looked at all five eligible receivers, before [4] coming back to the primary, Chris Harper, for the score [5].



him, forcing a fumble. “It was a brutal collision, the kind that everyone in the stadium could feel,” says Erik Lora, a former Panthers receiver who has been signed and released by two NFL teams. “The safety ended up with a serious neck injury and had to be taken out. Jimmy just kind of walked off. He can get banged around and be fine.”

That was Garoppolo’s junior season, which served as a launching pad for both the team and his career. After consecutive 2–9 seasons coach Bob Spoo retired in 2011. In his place, former Baylor receivers coach Dino Babers brought the fast-paced spread that Art Briles made famous in Waco. Garoppolo’s lightning-fast release fit the scheme perfectly. After throwing 34 touchdowns and 27 interceptions in his first two seasons, Garoppolo threw 31 TDs and only 15 picks as a junior. The next season he exploded for 53 touchdowns against nine interceptions while leading the Panthers to a 12–2 record. Garoppolo won the Walter Payton Award as the most outstanding player in the FCS. By that time he was a fixture on NFL draft boards.

“We had the No. 1 pick that year, so we worked on all the quarterbacks,” says Texans coach Bill O’Brien, a former offensive coordinator for the Patriots. “We took him to dinner, met with him

in a room and tested him. Very bright guy. We thought he had a quick release, was an accurate passer and was a really good guy. So I can see why [New England] liked him.” (Houston shored up its defensive and offensive lines before taking Pitt QB Tom Savage in the fourth round.)

“He has a little bit of an ‘it’ factor to him too,” says Pettine, who took his own quarterback, Johnny Manziel, in the same draft, 40 picks ahead of Garoppolo. “You meet with the kid, he’s got a bit of a personality to him. Subtle, but he has a presence.”

A **UNEVEN** transition to the pro game was not unexpected. The Baylor system is about as far as you can get from a pro-style offense this side of the triple option. It’s predicated on working quickly, spreading out the opponent and making rapid-fire deliveries on basic pass routes. The Patriots’ attack is complex even by NFL standards, because most of the routes are option routes, meaning that depending on how the defender plays the receiver, the route could have several combinations. For this reason, you will never see Julian Edelman continue on a go route if a cornerback is seven yards off him; he’ll break off and run a hitch, trusting Brady will also see what he sees. Put it another way: There’s a reason Edelman, who wasn’t a full-time starter until his fifth year, 2013, was the Patriots’ first successful drafted receiver since ’02 (Deion Branch, David Givens).

Still, despite struggles in practice—where Brady continues to get almost all the snaps—Garoppolo has shown a knack for raising his game. As a rookie he had a passer rating of 99.0 in the preseason. In

this year’s preseason opener, despite playing with mostly third-stringers, he completed 20 of 30 throws for 169 yards in a 22–11 loss to the Packers. His outing at New Orleans last Saturday was an even more shining example of Bright Lights Jimmy: Entering late in the first quarter with the Pats down 15–0, he completed 28 of 33 passes (84.8%) for 269 yards, with one touchdown and an interception in a 26–24 victory.

There to greet Garoppolo with a smile after his 24-yard TD was Brady, who, according to some reports, had been unhappy that the Patriots had picked a backup quarterback rather than draft more immediate help. Not so, offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels said during Super Bowl week last January.

“Tom’s been incredibly available for Jimmy,” McDaniels said before Brady & Co. beat the Seahawks to win their fourth championship. “Jimmy’s



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JIMMY GAROPPOLO

a sponge, and Tom's not afraid to tell him as much as he can. The one thing Tom knows is that if something happens to him, he needs Jimmy to be ready."

Little did they know at the time that such a scenario could play out so soon.

IF YOU'RE looking for a neon sign attached to a college QB that says HE'S THE NEXT GUY! then keep dreaming. No NFL coach is really sure when he drafts a franchise quarterback, unless he lucks into Andrew Luck. Who knows when Brady would have gotten his shot if Drew Bledsoe hadn't been put into a hospital by Mo Lewis in 2001? If Aaron Rodgers never got the chance to sub for an injured Brett Favre in a '07 showdown against the Cowboys, and nearly rescued Green Bay from a 27-10 hole, would Ted Thompson have been so confident moving on from Favre the next season?

Still, there are certain characteristics common to the better quarterbacks in the league, and Garoppolo seems to possess most of them. The key trait—and it's one that encapsulates a lot—is that the game looks as if it comes easy to him. When he drops back, his eyes are comfortably downfield while his head and shoulders remain on the same plane; they don't bounce up and down (like, say, Mark Sanchez's). For a quarterback who rarely took a snap from under center during his final two years of college, that's remarkable. Even with rushers bearing down on him, Garoppolo does not fluster easily. His footwork is impeccable.

Garoppolo's release is quick and compact and over the top. As a sophomore in high school he began working with former NFL quarterback Jeff Christensen, who retooled a long baseball-pitching motion. Garoppolo can make all the throws that Belichick and McDaniels look for and already has better deep-ball accuracy than Brady.

When feeling pressure, Garoppolo can shift a little too much to his back foot instead of staying balanced and on top of the ball, which is what happened on a fourth-quarter interception against the Saints. Yet sometimes talent can overcome a mechanical breakdown: The throw was actually very good, but safety Pierre Warren made an even better play. The larger problem was Garoppolo's decision to throw into double coverage, though that's something he'll do less often as he gains experience.

If there's an area where Garoppolo doesn't check all the boxes for personnel people, it's his size. Brady is 6' 4½" with long arms and big hands. Garoppolo has shorter arms and 9¼-inch hands, which are on the small side. Usually such physical shortcomings are a big concern for the Patriots, who felt they were offset by other assets, including Garoppolo's intelligence and work ethic.

"He's a better athlete than I thought he was going to be," says Green Bay coach Mike McCarthy, who knows something about athletic quarterbacks. "You can see it on the field, he moves very well."



THE MENTEE

"Jimmy's a sponge," says the Patriots' offensive coordinator, "and Tom's not afraid to tell him as much as he can."

If Garoppolo has to start for a suspended Brady, expect the Patriots to mix more deep passes into the game plan. But sometimes Garoppolo relies on the long ball as a crutch, which can hurt the scheme. With terrible protection against the Packers, Garoppolo went deep too many times, almost as a means to throw the ball away. Feeling more comfortable against the Saints, he lived more within the beautiful simplicity of New England's short passing game. McDaniels and Belichick will strike the balance between what's good for the team and Garoppolo's strengths. It's why they're the best at what they do.

BOTTOM LINE: This team isn't going to rise and fall this season because of Garoppolo. The Patriots are built around playing defense, running the ball (or at least the threat of running it to set up play action) and protecting the quarterback. If they don't do those things, it's not going to matter who's under center. Just look back at last year, when they started 2-2 against four teams that would not be in the playoffs at the end of the season—and that was *with* Brady. New England was a disaster along the offensive line, and Brady's performance was subpar because of that. The defense couldn't stop the run, and it wasn't able to play man coverage.

To this point, the Patriots have yet to field their starting offensive line because center Bryan Stork and guard Ryan Wendell have been injured. They could start a rookie, Tre' Jackson, at one of the guard spots. The defense that will begin the season is far from the unit that won Super Bowl XLIX. Run stuffer Vince Wilfork and press coverage corners Darrelle Revis and Brandon Browner are gone, replaced by unproven youngsters. In their first four games the Patriots will face two title contenders in the Steelers and the Cowboys and a dark horse in the Bills, whose new coach, Rex Ryan, has always frustrated Brady.

If Brady sits out those games, expect Garoppolo to do just fine, exhibiting the traits that indicate he'll be a name worth remembering for years to come. □

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BASEBALL

WRIGLEY HEALED

*Optimism? Confidence?
Expectations of success?
There's no title yet, but things
have changed at the ivy-covered
burial ground on the North Side*

BY RICH COHEN

Photographs by
Charles Cherney for Sports Illustrated

THE EL WORD

Wrigley, which opened in 1914, loves its traditions, but soon losing may no longer be one of them.



A FEW WEEKS before I turned 47, for reasons I don't quite understand myself, I felt compelled to travel to Chicago, sit in the bleachers at Wrigley Field and watch the Cubs. I suppose it had to do with getting older and my fear of death, but there was also a general sense that something remarkable was happening in what Ernie Banks called the Friendly Confines and Steve Goodman called the ivy-covered burial ground: The Cubs were winning.

No one loved Wrigley Field more than Bill Veeck, who worked for the Cubs in the 1920s and '30s when his father was team president. Though Veeck went

on to enjoy one of the most colorful careers in baseball history—owner, promoter, madman—he spent some of his last days, when he knew he was dying of cancer, in the rightfield bleachers at Wrigley, ending as he began: with a frosty malt, watching the Cubs lose.

It was Veeck who, as a young man, planted the ivy that became the franchise's boon and bane, a clock that mirrored the timeline of most Cubs seasons: dormant in April, beautiful in July, ragged by August. Some believe the team traded its mojo for greenery. When Veeck planted it in 1937, he was following a scheme cooked up by owner Phil Wrigley, who, perhaps more interested in chewing gum than

baseball, had designed a strategy around quality of life. Going to a Cubs game would be like going to a picnic—not about victory or defeat, but about having a great time. This, the theory goes, killed incentive. If the stadium sells out even when the club is miles out of the race, who needs to win?

It's fitting that Veeck—see his memoir *Veeck as in Wreck*—took a station in right, as the rightfield bleacher bums have always been a nastier lot, maybe because rightfield at Wrigley is a kind of Bermuda Triangle, where singles turn into triples and routine flies vanish altogether. It's the sun and the long afternoon shadows and the swirling wind. The fans can be even worse than the weather, hectoring outfielders into ruinous attack. In April 1983, Keith

Moreland, having been doused with beer, had to be restrained from storming into the stands, resulting in the best press conference in Chicago history.

"F--- those f-----' fans who come out here and say they're Cub fans that are supposed to be behind you, rippin' every f-----' thing you do," manager Lee Elia, who was fired about 10 seconds later, said of the Wrigley faithful. "I'll tell you one f-----' thing, I hope we get f-----' hotter than s---, just to stuff it up them 3,000 f-----' people that show up every f-----' day, because if they're the real Chicago f-----' fans, they can kiss my f-----' ass right downtown and PRINT IT. . . . What the f--- am I supposed to do, go out there and let my f-----' players get destroyed every day and be quiet about it? For the f-----' nickel-dime people that show up? The mother----- don't even work. That's why they're out at the f-----' game. . . . Eighty-five percent of the f-----' world is working. The other 15 come out here. A f-----' playground for the c------. . ."

Now and then, when things got slow, the right-field bleacher bums would even turn on us left-fielders, chanting, "Leftfield sucks, leftfield sucks." Which was not news. I mean, we knew we sucked. How else to explain our compulsion to return year after year with the same groundless expectation.

And yet, for most of us, there was a breaking point. For some, maybe it was 2003 with the Bartman game. Maybe it was 1969, when the Cubs, who'd led the NL by nine games, dropped eight straight in September, giving way to the surging Mets. For me, it was 1984, the season when my geometry of hope and disappointment were fixed. I attended 27 games that summer, always sitting in the leftfield bleachers. The '84 Cubs, a team that won the NL East in a walk, a team that featured a group dubbed the all-animal infield—Bull at first; Ryno at second; Bowa at short; Penguin at third; Trout on the hill—won and won right up to the moment that they lost it all. I was watching on TV when Padres first baseman Steve Garvey hit the home run that killed us. I quietly excused myself, went outside and wept. I kept going to games after that, but it wasn't the same. I'd been wounded by experience, slapped into sobriety. It's like old men used to say about the Great War: You come back, but come back different.

And then, at a certain point, I stopped going altogether. Because I'd learned the lesson: The world is misery, and human endeavor ends in pain. We lose and lose and win but only for a moment because we're still too busy losing. An old Cubs fan is as fatalistic as a French existentialist. *All*



CROWD CONTROL

Inspired by a winning record, new management and players like Lester (third from right), fans at Wrigley have a new energy.

we have is this, and here, and now. Live for today, for tomorrow we lose. The Cubs have not won since 1908. The Cubs have never won in Wrigley. Not even in the years of Andre Dawson, not even in the years of Greg Maddux and Mark Grace. Even in those seasons when the team gets off to a jack-rabbit start, you know how it's going to finish. Only kids feel different because, as any parent can tell you, kids are stupid.

But now, for the first time in several decades, the Cubs have me hoping and believing and thinking, Maybe, just maybe. It's Tom Ricketts, who bought the team in 2009; Theo Epstein, who came on as President of Baseball Operations in '11; Joe Maddon, who became skipper this season. Mostly it's the players: Anthony Rizzo, Kris Bryant, Dexter Fowler, Jon Lester, Jake Arrieta and the kid, Kyle Schwarber. It's not just that they win—as of this writing, they're 72–51—but how they look doing it. As giddy as a team in the Little League world series. As happy as a bunch of half-blasted guys playing 16-inch softball by the lake. Not only will this team bring me back, I thought, they will bring back all the wounded old-timers.



Check out SI's The Strike Zone podcast each week for the latest buzz in baseball at SI.com/podcasts

I LANDED IN Chicago with just enough time to check into a hotel, dump my bags and hop on the EL, which took me over the rooftops of the North Side, in and out of redbrick buildings with glimpses of wood and steel. From the back, the houses are a complicated weave of

THE CUBS

fire escapes. As a kid I used to imagine hitting a baseball into the grid, watching it bound like a dinger hit into empty seats. This was the first game I'd seen in years, and I was as giddy as any of the men and women and kids who filled the train with hats and jerseys. It got crowded, more crowded, impossibly crowded. At Addison Street the doors burst open and the masses spilled down the steps as the cars tottered away like a popped balloon.

The atmosphere was carnival-like before the game. I stopped at Murphy's bar across from the rightfield bleacher entrance for a beer with an Iraq war veteran who told stories about Cubs greats of yesteryear, Kenny Holtzman and Rick Monday. "You know, in the old, old days there was no World Series, no real championship," he said. "When the season ended, one team had taken the pennant and that was it. For most teams, the idea of winning was finished by July. So what was there to care about? Each series, each game. Day by day. The rest of it, the big dream, was not their business. It's a better way to live."



Evening shadows were creeping up the facades on Sheffield Avenue. I walked around the stadium. Wrigley had been renovated in the off-season. The bleachers were popped out, in the way sections of a mobile home can be popped out when you reach the campgrounds. It has given the surrounding streets a cavernous effect. More than ever the neighborhood feels like an older America. A group of men, grown-ups who should know better, Lee Elia's mother-----, had stationed themselves, with baseball gloves, on Waveland Avenue. The Cubs were taking batting practice, and here were souvenir hunters, hoping to snag the random blast that cleared the park. A security guard shouted down from the bleachers, "Bryant's coming up." There was a flurry among the hunters. A moment later the balls started flying out. Banged off a building. Bounded down an avenue. Skipped

along the pavement, the men chasing after them.

The seats were filled by the first pitch. General admission. Bench seating. Standing room only. Fans leaned against the perimeter fence, arranged along the steps that service the centerfield bleachers, their silhouettes dark against the dark sky, that vast Chicago sky of my childhood, as thin as gossamer, as deep as the deep end of the pool. The ancient scoreboard towers against it like a memory of the 1930s: Babe Ruth calling his shot in the '32 World Series; Gabby Hartnett hitting the homer in the gloamin' against the Pirates in '38. That scoreboard, which once loomed like a palisade, has since been diminished by modern screens installed behind the left- and rightfield seats. And yet the overall atmosphere remains the same. The body has gone under the knife, but the soul is intact.

The Cubs were playing the Rockies. Like many games in my youth, it was over a moment after it started, Colorado jumping all over the Chicago

starter, 26-year-old Oklahoman Dallas Beeler.

Below are the notes I took during the game.

Summer night. Big moon. Pennants flagging above the big board in a sultry fashion, slowly, as if underwater.

A guy dressed in Cubs regalia saying to another guy dressed in same: "Just to give you an idea, his son's no genius either."

Jerseys worn in my vicinity: Dawson, Sandberg, Santo, Ramirez, Reuschel.

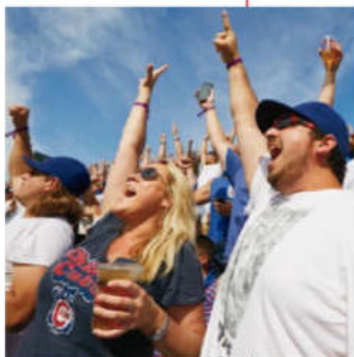
Top of first. Two strikes and two balls on leadoff hitter, Blackmon. He doubles to left. Number 2 batter doubles to right. Then a walk. Air goes out of the bleachers. Nolan Arenado doubles to left. My God, it's a shooting gallery! The kid next to me was born in 1992 and knows prospects down to Single A. He speaks of promising trades. How about trading one of those prospects for an out?

THE CUBS

Bottom of first. Fowler goes down swinging. Schwarber walks. Bryant: Big swing and miss. Bryant strikes out a lot, and it can be like watching the Whammer and Roy Hobbs at the county fair. A drunk three rows back curses him as the new Dave Kingman. Memories of Kong make me shudder down to the ground . . . and then Bryant walks.

Now when you get a hot dog at Wrigley, they ask if you want “real onions.”

THE ROCKIES were up 7–2 at the end of the eighth. Several people had been kicked out by then, some for rowdy behavior, some for underage drinking, some for both. The crowd was younger than I remembered. Where had the old guys gone, the characters who used to sit beside me, sharing wisdom, statistics, jokes? (“How d’ya say Garage Key in Russian? Grajkey! Ha! Ha!” Cough. Cough. Sigh.) I realized that I was the old man now, at least 10 years senior to my closest neighbor. I’d become



Bill Veeck or Harry Caray, who in the late summer used to broadcast games from the rightfield seats, getting hammered as the day went on, as the legend goes. The average age was probably 23 out there, the young workers of Rahm Emanuel’s Chicago.

There was something strange about these fans—it was how they carried themselves, cheered. The bleacher bum is traditionally humorous and wise. When you live on a wheel, you know what awaits beyond the next turn. But these new bleacher creatures actually expect to win! I mean, they really think it’s going to happen. Next season. This season. “We get that wild card, nothing can stop us.” This, as much as the retooled roster, is the work of Ricketts and Epstein. They’ve steadily created a new mind-set, the low expectations of the fans being a great enabler of futility. You see a change even now, in the first years of the new

For the first
time in
decades, the
Cubs have
me hoping
and thinking,
Maybe, just
maybe.

dispensation. I was in the same seats in the same park, but it was a new country.

I saw it in the way these kids heckled—not with comic sensibility, nor weary acceptance of defeat, but with outrage. They were appalled by poor play, believing they were entitled to better. I felt like a relic among them, a miser fishing for crab from a broken-down pier. In the future my cast of mind, characterized by the acceptance and even the comfort of defeat, a worldview formed by the Cubs, will seem unhealthy, strange. At best, they will pity me. At worst, they will hate me and those of my generation who cling to the solace of Bill Buckner’s 1980 batting title amid a season’s sea of woe, or Ernie Banks’s two MVPs won while playing for terrible teams. Why did the Hebrews wander 40 years in the desert? Because God was waiting for the slave generation to die. It takes a people unsullied by the stink of history to settle the promised land.

THE NEXT AFTERNOON I met my friend Dennis for the matinee. The Cubs didn’t install lights at Wrigley Field until 1988 and have always seemed more natural and at ease in the sun. It was an entirely different crowd. Kids and fathers and dreams of the

KIDDIE POOL

The Cubs are ahead of schedule thanks to their youth movement

BY JOE SHEEHAN

next 20 years. Smoothies instead of beer, and the Cubs rattling the cages, sending balls deep into the outfield. Dennis talked about real estate deals and life choices and how, no matter what we do with our time, we end up like our parents, but I did my best to watch the game. Lester was on the mound for Chicago. He stared in for the sign with a quizzical look. He struck out 14. No lefthander had done that at Wrigley since Sandy Koufax struck out 18 in 1962.

It was hot but there was a breeze, and the sky was filled with fair-weather cumulus, vertiginous white clouds with flat gray undersides, arranged like stepping-stones. In them I could see Jose Cardenal's Afro and Rick Reuschel's belly and Ivan DeJesus, who, before each at bat, would cross himself then grab his crotch. Nothing bad can happen on a day like that. When Anthony Rizzo clinched the game with a towering shot in the third, it felt inevitable, as certain as victory to a 25-year-old.

The innings passed like silos on a Wisconsin road trip. Sixth, seventh, eighth. As Cubs fans, we found ourselves in the unusual position of hoping not much more would happen. We stood and cheered for the last out, then streamed down the ramps.

Looking out at the street, I remembered a long-ago moment, perhaps my favorite, that typifies the local sensibility. It was late innings in a game lost hours before. Rain had come and gone, leaving the bleachers half empty, with a scatter of dead-enders. Some big enemy slugger tagged a hanging curve, turned it into a speck that dropped onto Waveland Avenue. We clamored to the fence to watch it bounce. It landed near a mailman making his rounds. He stared at the ball a moment, then picked it up and turned it over. Looking up at us, he shouted, "Ours or theirs?"

"Theirs!"

In one easy motion the mailman, the bag still slung across his shoulder, threw the ball over the fence. It traveled a perfect parabola, landing without sound on the soggy outfield grass. It was the best play of the day. □



THIS WAS SUPPOSED to be a developmental season for the Cubs. Instead, they have the fourth-best record in baseball and a near-lock on an NL wild-card slot.

This isn't luck, and it isn't an accident. Chicago put itself in this position by aggressively promoting top young players to the majors. Kris Bryant, Addison Russell and Kyle Schwarber were just names on prospect lists—though

high on prospect lists—five months ago. Now they're core contributors to a team on its way to 90-plus wins.

Bryant, 23, was the first to arrive, promoted the minute he could be brought up without making him a free agent after the 2020 season. The third baseman has hit .262/.366/.481 through Monday with 20 home runs, some of them of the jaw-dropping variety.

Russell came next. The Cubs brought up the Barry Larkin starter kit on April 21 to take over at second base, and earlier this month Joe Maddon succumbed to the inevitable and switched him with Starlin Castro; Russell is not just the better defensive shortstop, he's also the better hitter. While Russell, 21, is hitting just .249/.309/.392, second base was such a disaster for the Cubs last year—their keystoners hit .230/.280/.342—that the rookie has improved things considerably.

The biggest impact may have come last. Catcher Schwarber was called up on June 16 to DH in interleague games and sent down six days later. He returned on July 17 and will likely never go back. Schwarber has 11 home runs in just 134 at bats. When he starts, the Cubs are 24-10, averaging 5.5 runs per game; they are 48-41, scoring 3.7 runs

per game, without him.

By remaking their lineup with excellent young players, the Cubs are not only in position to make the postseason but also to be a threat once they get there. The best defense against a curse is talent, and this team now has enough to face down the Cardinals, Dodgers and whatever cosmic forces have aligned against them for more than a century.

YOUNG GUNS
Schwarber (above) and company have helped the Cubs to a 95-win pace.





PRO BASKETBALL

+

The Incredible Journey of

SETH CURRY

After starring at two colleges, the shooting guard has had three cups of coffee in the NBA, put up big numbers for two D-League squads and played for three more NBA franchises in summer leagues—all in the past two years. And now, thanks to a new deal with Sacramento, Steph's little brother has finally made it

BY LEE JENKINS

STICKER SHOCK

Curry got a chance to add to his family's NBA legacy when the Kings gave him a two-year contract worth \$2 million.

Photograph by
Brian Lowe
For Sports Illustrated



SETH CURRY sat in a Hollywood parking lot, behind the wheel of a white GMC Yukon, unable to turn on the ignition. It was late afternoon, and traffic was building on the freeway leading back to his house in the San Fernando Valley, but for an hour he did not budge. He had already called friends and FaceTimed family. His brother and his father had told him how proud they were. But still he couldn't bring himself to drive home and celebrate. "I just sat there," Curry says. "I'm not an emotional person, but I was emotional then. I was reflecting on the whole journey I've had."

The backyard battles he couldn't win; the biased crowds he couldn't convert; the hamstring he strained when he should have been

collecting scholarship offers and the shin he rehabbed when he should have been conducting draft workouts; the winters in Santa Cruz, Calif., and Erie, Pa., that wouldn't end, the calls from Europe and Asia that wouldn't stop, the 10-day contracts in Cleveland and Phoenix that weren't renewed; the night he played his first NBA game with the Grizzlies—and was waived on the bus an hour later; the night he hit his first NBA basket over James Harden—still his only bucket.

For the first 12 years of his life, he was Dell's son, and for the last 12, he was Steph's younger brother, until July 21 in that Hollywood parking lot. Vlade Divac remembered him, a shy second-grader hiding behind Dell and Steph on the Charlotte Hornets' practice court in 1997, occasionally stepping out and unleashing three-pointers. Dell hated those heaves, for fear they would mess with mechanics, but Divac appreciated the ambition. Now the general manager of the Kings, he offered Seth the chance to step out for good. A two-year guaranteed contract worth \$2 million may not move the needle like a championship trophy, but it continued the Summer of Curry, and it capped an equally impressive odyssey.

Steph's story is a fairy tale. Seth's is the reality play of an undersized and underrecruited combo guard, with excellent genes and awful luck. He put up more points in a season than anybody in the history of Charlotte Christian High—including the 2015 NBA MVP. He was the top-scoring freshman in the nation at Liberty. He transferred to Duke, where he averaged 17.5 points as a senior, despite wearing a walking boot at every practice because of a stress fracture in his right shin. "He's going to be as good or better than I am," Steph predicted in '08. But 6' 2", 185-pound snipers are never a sure thing, regardless of the name on the back of their jersey. Seth went undrafted in '13.

You might have seen him in this year's NBA playoffs, convulsing in the lower bowl at Smoothie King Center in New Orleans as Steph made the game-tying corner three while getting pummeled by two Pelicans; or at the MVP ceremony, pretending not to cry as Steph hailed his perseverance; or after the Warriors wrapped up the championship, rushing down to the court as Steph gave out hugs. What you didn't see were the late-night workouts at Golden State's practice facility, the early morning drills at Beverly Hills High, the trip



Steph's story is a fairy tale. Seth's is the reality of an undersized and underrecruited COMBO GUARD WITH EXCELLENT GENES AND AWFUL LUCK.

to Cleveland during the Finals when he stole away to practice at a high school gym. "I'm so happy for Steph and what he's accomplished," says Seth, 25. "But you want it for yourself too." He incinerated the Las Vegas Summer League, as Steph watched nervously on NBATV, tuning in from the delivery room the day his second daughter, Ryan, was born. "Wife gave the approval," Steph clarifies.

Over the past two years Seth dominated the NBA Development League, scoring 23.8 points per game last season for the Erie BayHawks and sinking 46.7% of his threes. He went on binges, like the time he reeled off 25 points against Delaware in the fourth quarter and overtime. And he shook off slumps, like the time he started



0 for 10 against Sioux Falls and emerged from the bench to nail the game-winner. He has a scoop shot and a step-back jumper, same as his brother, and he bounds around screens and finds open spaces, same as his father. But the blend is all his own. So why, given his dynamic skills and famous bloodline, did it take so long for a team to claim him? “I’ve heard people say I’m a Curry and that helped me get where I am,” Seth says. “Sometimes I think it’s the opposite.”

LUNCH HOUR on the back patio of Vivian’s Millennium Café in Studio City and Seth can see the busboy in the Dodgers cap approaching before he even orders his eggs. He knows what the kid is going to say. “Are you . . . Steph Curry’s brother?” Seth nods, smiles, agrees that it was a sensational year in the Bay. “Maybe I’m different,” he says, when the busboy retreats. “But I don’t get bothered by that. I’m proud of it.”

He is used to it. As a boy, strangers asked about Dell and wondered whether his marks-



SETH AND TAXES

Curry has been dependable at every stop, including (from left) Duke, Santa Cruz, Erie and Vegas (for the Pelicans).

manship would be passed down. “The public can talk about that kind of thing,” Dell told his sons, “but we’re not talking about it in our house. You are not your dad. You are your own player.” When Steph emerged as a local hot-shot, the message had to be repeated. “You’re different people,” Dell said. “There are no comparisons.” While outsiders marveled at their similar frames and strokes, the Curry boys felt more like a study in contrast. “Off the court, in terms of personality, we’re totally different,” Seth says. Steph is animated and polished. Seth is so reserved he once went to a middle school dance and refused to leave the car. He is more outgoing now, having delivered the best man’s toast at his brother’s wedding four years ago, and his restraint comes across as edgy and cool. When a friend asked about his tears during the MVP speech, he deadpanned, “That was just for the ladies.”

He learned his hoops by watching Dell and battling Steph. When Dell overhauled Steph’s shot one summer in Charlotte, Seth silently adjusted his own, so he wouldn’t have to endure the whole painful process later. When the family moved to Toronto and Dell played for the Raptors, Seth spent the first half of games in the stands at Air Canada Centre, and the second half mimicking what he’d just seen as he dueled Steph on the practice court in the arena. Because Seth was 2½ years younger, he relied on gimmicks to compete in the seven-game series they staged, quitting if he took an early lead or threatening to quit over iffy foul calls. But as he grew, and matchups shifted to the full court behind their Charlotte home, he didn’t need the stunts. He won his share. Steph admired the strength with which he attacked the basket, whether he was hacked or not.

Those buckets imbued him with confidence that no AAU showcase could. When students at Charlotte Latin School chanted, *You’re not Stephen!* Seth answered with four straight threes. “It was his fuel,” says Charlotte Christian coach Shonn Brown. “His motivation.” Seth was never bitter but always driven. Steph wrote DAVIDSON with a glow-in-the-dark marker on Seth’s bedroom wall, hoping he’d follow in his college footsteps. But that was Steph’s campus. “I didn’t want to go to Davidson,” Seth says. “I wanted to do my own thing.” He chose Liberty, after a hamstring injury sidelined him in the

summer before his senior season, costing him looks from bigger programs.

"He was better at creating his shot than anybody I've ever seen at 18 years old," says Liberty coach Ritchie McKay. Seth scored 26 points at Virginia in his third game and two weeks later put up 24 at Clemson. Opponents in the Big South doubled him, face-guarded him, ran box-and-ones against him. Weary of the junk defenses, he headed to Duke after one year, and in his first game against North Carolina scored 18 second-half points to spark a stunning comeback. He was an NBA prospect, and then he wasn't, when shin splints turned to a stress fracture the month before his senior season. He could have undergone surgery and taken a medical redshirt, but he chose to play, sitting out practices to spare his legs. He still boosted the Blue Devils to the regional final, but he required surgery in the spring, which destroyed his draft stock.

Seth's father and his agent, Alex Saratsis at Octagon, formed a plan. He would spend up to two years in the D-League, chasing the NBA carrot, and if he didn't reach it by fall 2015 he would head overseas and earn as much money as he could. Sensing more than a marketing opportunity, the Warriors signed Seth two months after the draft and sent him to their affiliate in Santa Cruz, where he scored 36 points in his first game. Because he was in the D-League, any NBA team could nab him, and Memphis came calling two months into his pro career. Seth assumed his dues were paid. Then the Grizzlies waived him the day he made his debut. They told him to stay at the Westin across from FedEx Forum while they explored trading a guard and inking him to a 10-day contract. They traded the guard, Jerryd Bayless, but they never gave him the 10-day.

The Cavaliers did, two months later, and Seth sank a corner three in his first game against the Rockets. But he didn't play another minute for Cleveland, returning to Santa Cruz, where he scored 44 points in a playoff game 10 days later. Back in the D-League he was paired in the backcourt with Mychel Thompson, brother of Golden State guard Klay Thompson. "They called us the Splash Brothers and everything," Seth says. "I hated that stuff. It was so corny. We didn't even have our own nickname."

Last season he signed with the Magic and moved to their D-League team in Erie, where



Steph says
his brother
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escape the
comparisons
to me and
our dad.
BUT HE
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HIS OWN
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he found nothing to do at night but queue up League Pass on his laptop and watch Steph light the NBA on fire. Dell rejoiced for one son and felt for the other. "That's when you have to make sure you're giving him the same amount of attention," Dell says. "We watched all of his D-League games on YouTube. We went up there to see him. We had to let him know, 'We haven't forgotten about you. Your path is going to be different. But it's just as important.'"

Seth was never discouraged by Steph's star turn. If anything, he was emboldened by it. "I played against this guy my whole life," he thought. "I can make that league."

On a road trip to play the Westchester Knicks in early December, Erie coach Bill Peterson pulled Seth aside in the hotel lobby. "You are an NBA player," he told him. "You have an NBA talent: You can score. I don't care about your brother. We have to get you to the NBA." General managers wanted to see Seth finish around the basket, so he practiced 50 floaters a day. They wanted to see him defend bigger guards, so he matched up against 6' 5" wings. They wanted to see his conditioning improve, so he searched for sandwiches when other BayHawks made burger runs. "Go show 'em," Peterson urged. "Don't leave any questions. Don't leave any doubt."

But every time Seth addressed one concern, another surfaced. "Focus more on defense? O.K.," Seth says. "Score in ways other than jump shots? O.K. Shoot more free throws? O.K. There was always something. I didn't know what else I could do." Peterson stewed when he heard scouts whisper, "He doesn't do *this* like his brother. He doesn't do *that* like his brother. He's not as big as his brother." One night Peterson barked back, "There isn't anybody in the world who does it like his brother. So change the guy's name. Look at him differently."

Seth wondered whether evaluations would improve if he were a Smith. "They were comparing me to the MVP," he says, "instead of the people in the D-League, who I was pretty much dominating."

Offers from clubs in Europe and Asia poured into the Octagon offices. "How about another \$50,000," reps asked. "Another 75? Another 100?" Saratsis turned them all down. "That wasn't what I wanted," Seth says. "I want people to see what I can do. Not see what Steph can do, or my dad can do, and then assume that's what I do. I want them to actually watch me play, and

then decide who they think I am.” In Erie he scored 30 or more points eight times, operating on the ball and off. He drained 156 threes in 43 games. He shot 66.7% in clutch situations. He threw flames from the perimeter, but he also punished defenders who closed out too hard, driving past them for floaters and scoops. He and Steph talked regularly, sometimes about schemes and reads, but also about frustration and persistence. “He can’t escape the comparisons to me and our dad,” Steph says. “But he can create his own story.”

POP CULTURE

Seth had a quick stay with the Suns (opposite) before congratulating Steph (below right) with Dell, who showed off his baby boy in 1993.



Six months remained until his self-imposed deadline. Then it was off to Europe. He couldn’t make \$13,000 in the D-League forever. The Suns finally awarded him a 10-day contract in March but declined to renew it, saying they wanted a guard with more experience. They later signed Jerel McNeal, who had never played in the NBA before.

PLAYERS ON 10-day contracts do not typically get many minutes in games, so they are judged in practice. “And practice has never really been Seth’s thing,” says Johnny Stephene, a former Liberty teammate. “We had to change the way he thought about practice.” Stephene, a ball-handling coach who runs a training program called HandleLife, designed workouts for Seth that felt like games.

“I got four or five guys, former D-I players, to really defend him and trap him,” Stephene



says. “He had to get his shot off, find the open man, split the screen. He had to get creative.” Seth spent the spring in the Bay Area, where he stayed with Steph, but he flew often to L.A. for 7 a.m. sessions with Stephene at Beverly Hills High. “He would come back and have all these stories about watching Steph in the playoffs,” Stephene says. “I tried to tell him, ‘Feel like you’re out there—because your time is coming.’”

Summer League had never been kind to Seth. In 2014 he averaged only 9.8 points in Orlando, with the Magic, and 10.2 in Las Vegas, with the Suns. This July he returned to Vegas, but he was with the Pelicans, and Darren Erman was the coach. Erman, who had worked with Seth at Golden State, told him, “We’re going to give you every opportunity to show what you can do.” It was Seth’s last chance, and his best one. Erman played him 30 minutes or more in every game, and Seth put up 24.3 points. Oddly, he shot just 22.2% from three, proving once and for all that he could do more than let fly from the wing. Erman challenged him during timeouts. *Can you guard this guy? Can you score in that situation?* “Without question,” Seth replied. It became a mantra.

The Kings made the strongest offer on July 21—the day after Summer League ended—but not the only one. The Pelicans, Hornets and Warriors jumped in as well. “I didn’t want to go to Golden State,” Seth says. “I didn’t want to go back in Steph’s shadow.” He will come off the bench in Sacramento, as a backup to point guards Rajon Rondo and Darren Collison, and a complement to both in smaller lineups. Seth and Rondo could form a particularly intriguing pair, since Seth can space the floor with his shooting and Rondo cannot. “I know that people compared him to Steph, and that may have hurt him before, but I will not do that,” Divac says. “I’m just looking for Seth. He is my guy.”

He will wear number 30, like his father and brother, the emblem of basketball’s first family. “It feels right,” Seth says. He has been the victim of unreasonable expectations and the beneficiary of invaluable experiences. Drills with Dell at Charlotte Coliseum. H-O-R-S-E games with Steph that lasted two hours. Late-night calls that encouraged and inspired. Whatever the price attached to that name and number, it was clearly worth paying. He received optimal training without preferential treatment.

He earned the right to make his own splash. □

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



HOW DOES something like this begin?

Maybe it begins the moment the coach tells you that you're not good enough. Maybe it begins the following day, almost by accident—a hot and humid afternoon, the football slipping out of your sweaty hand as you throw it, making it suddenly difficult to complete an act you've done so well for so long.

Maybe it begins the next morning, with the simplest drill at a summer practice. No helmets, no pads, no spectators in the crowd. Receivers lined up, running simple 10- to 12-yard outs. The bullet you're used to firing wobbles toward the target. A second pass, and the ball smacks the turf a few feet in front of a different receiver. You shake it off. *Everyone has bad days.*

Still another throw: This one sails five feet over the wideout's head. A few teammates will later compare the drill with that scene from *Tin Cup* in which Kevin Costner's character has the shanks on the driving range. There's nothing different about your throwing motion; the ball just comes out of your hand wrong. *You all right?* your teammates ask.

You are certain tomorrow will be better, but over the coming days and weeks your performance gets worse. *What are you doing?* you say to yourself. *You've been throwing a ball since you were seven years old!* Those who know you best will wonder if you will ever take another snap from center. Your story will become one of the strangest of the 2014 college football season: the tale of the quarterback who could not throw.

THEY CALL him Sunshine, after the quarterback from *Remember the Titans*, and the nickname was always perfect for Joel Stave: He's 6' 5" and 219 pounds, with Hollywood looks, wavy blond hair and a glittering smile.



Yippe Ki-ya

BY ALBERT CHEN

A YEAR AFTER HE LOST THE ABILITY TO THROW A FOOTBALL, WISCONSIN QUARTERBACK

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of Joel Stave, a Wisconsin Badgers football player, running up a set of concrete stairs. He is wearing a red jersey with the number 2, white pants with red stripes, and a white helmet. He is smiling and looking up. A large crowd of fans, many wearing red and white Badgers gear, is gathered on the stairs and surrounding areas, reaching out to touch him. A large red banner with a white 'W' logo is visible on the right. The background shows a building with a 'health' sign and a clear blue sky.

e
zy

RAY OF SUNSHINE

A walk-on from Greenfield, Wis., Stave got a warm welcome last week at Camp Randall after a season that took a baffling turn.

Photograph by
Todd Rosenberg
For Sports Illustrated

JOEL STAVE IS BACK FIRING BULLETS AND READY TO RIDE TO THE TOP OF THE BIG TEN WEST

“He’s such a freakin’ cliché, it’s laughable,” says Wisconsin senior tight end Jordan Frederick. “The quarterback is the smartest guy on the team and the best looking. When you’re around him walking down a street, it’s funny how many heads turn, like there’s this glow around him.”

Stave (pronounced STAH-vay) had the storybook start too: Wisconsin kid from Whitnall High in Greenfield (pop. 36,672) walks on to the program he grew up worshipping and becomes the starter in Madison as a redshirt freshman, leading a floundering team to a 4–1 record before a broken left collarbone in the ninth game ends his season. Then as a sophomore he threw the second-most touchdown passes (22) in school history, completing 61.9% of his attempts during a 9–4 campaign. Everything seemed to be falling into place for a breakout junior season until second-year Badgers coach Gary Andersen, less than two weeks before the opener, announced that 6' 6", 231-pound Tanner McEvoy and not Stave would start against LSU.

By all accounts the decision shocked the locker room. “He was our guy,” says one Badger. “No disrespect to Tanner, but everyone knew who the best quarterback in camp was.” (Andersen explained that a dual-threat quarterback such as McEvoy, a junior college transfer from Arizona Western, gave the team a better chance against the Tigers.)

No player was more surprised than Sunshine. “He didn’t come out and say it, because he wanted to be a good teammate, but the truth was that he was furious,” says Stave’s brother, Bryan, a Wisconsin grad. “There’s also no doubt his confidence took a hit.”

The following day: Stave and Frederick, one of his best friends, were playing catch in the team’s indoor facility. “It was hot,” Frederick recalls. “The ball was slipping out of his hands, and he couldn’t make any clean throws. I didn’t think too much of it at the time. Then he came the next day”—referring to the *Tin Cup* episode—“and the exact same thing was happening. Except it



WELCOME SIGHT

Throwing like it’s 2013 (right), Stave reclaimed his starter’s role and has flashed his old form during camp.



wasn’t wet.” That Saturday at NRG Stadium in Houston, before the Badgers faced LSU, Stave was warming up and still couldn’t complete any basic passes. His misfires were so bad that reporters in the press box began to take notice. When he threw 30- or 40-yarders, he felt fine. But the 10-yard throw? Impossible. A Badgers media staffer looking on that day thought, *No way, this kid is never coming back from this.*

On the Monday after a 28–24 loss to LSU, Andersen released a statement that Stave wouldn’t play for a few weeks because of a shoulder injury from a hit he took during the Capital One Bowl eight months earlier. A few Badgers players were in the locker room when they saw the news on the TV crawl. “We’re like, What? We know that isn’t true,” says Frederick. “We knew what the real reason was.”

Stave, whose shoulder had healed, was irked by his coach’s misdirection, even if Andersen was trying to protect his quarterback. Later that



JOEL
STAVE



"No one's harder
on me than myself,"
says Stave.

*"Football has
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important
to me. But to
get through
this, I think
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less."*

day, in an awkward series of events, Andersen retracted his statement and Stave faced reporters to clear the air: His issues were mental. "I'll be throwing it good, throwing it good and then all of a sudden I feel like I hang on to it too long," he explained. "One will sail, one will slip and then you start thinking, 'Oh, I've got to hang on to it longer.' That's what happens when you start thinking too much."

The story of an athlete who suddenly loses the ability to perform is not unfamiliar, but this victim seemed particularly unlikely: Stave was always the unflappable golden boy who never shied away from center stage. Once, during a student-athlete talent show, Stave got up in front of 600 people and sang Train's "Tears of Jupiter." When he and his buddies would go to a Madison piano bar, Stave, who started lessons at age five, would not only bound onto the stage at the crowd's urging, but he would also bring the house down with his performance.

On the football field Stave had suffered spells of inconsistency before, but he had always battled his way back with hard work. That approach wasn't helping now. He found that more hours on the practice field, that more reps before and after team sessions, accomplished nothing. In fact, whatever he tried only added to the torment and the cruelty, laying his inner struggles out for all the Badgers to see. "When it started, it made me feel embarrassed. It made me feel just dumb," he says. "You start thinking about what everyone else is thinking, and that just wears on you really badly. You think, *I'll show them*, and then you start trying too hard, trying to force it too much, and you get even more lost.

"I kind of crawled up into my own head. And I got into a very weird, weird place."

THE TERM was coined almost a century ago by the Scottish golfer Tommy Armour, who defined the yips as "a brain spasm that impairs the short game." Most prevalent in golf, the condition crops up in other sports: in darts it is

dartitis; in archery it is *target panic*. In baseball it's been called Steve Blass disease (named after the Pirates' pitcher who suddenly could not find the strike zone) or Chuck Knoblauch disease (after the Yankees' second baseman who could not make routine tosses to first).

"There are two types of yips," explains Michael Lardon, a San Diego sports psychologist who has worked with Olympic gold medalists, golf champions, and MLB and NFL players. There's focal dystonia: a movement disorder, mostly in older athletes, that occurs when an unwanted muscle contraction—a tremor, a twitch—leads to an involuntary movement, as if the motor cortex is no longer moving smoothly. Then all it may take is a small adjustment—a change in the grip in golf, for instance—to alter the motor path slightly and rescue the player from what Lardon calls "the rut."

The second kind—which, Landon believes, Stave experienced—is similar to a panic attack. It manifests "when we're overwhelmed with anxiety and we short-circuit our cognitive mechanism," Lardon says before offering an example. "A tennis player who can't serve the ball into the court because she becomes so anxious that she's no longer able to think. That's accompanied by automatic hyperarousal—the heart rate is up, the breathing is fast."

Players dealing with the yips include kickers who suddenly cannot convert extra points (the Packers' Mason Crosby struggled not long ago before recovering) and receivers who drop wide-open passes (Braylon

Edwards, whose career nose-dived as a result), but the condition is rare in football because the game is played mostly on instinct in short bursts. Stave's case is the rare one involving a quarterback, even though the position does seem more conducive than others to the yips: After dropping back, he's alone in the pocket with time to think—sometimes too much time.

Lardon surmises that Stave probably “was feeling more pressure, having lost his starting job,” which led to “overthinking and creating an impediment in the reflex loop.” He continues: “When Peyton Manning reads cornerbacks, it’s all done at a subconscious level, automatically. You get into trouble when you want to be more accurate or perform better. By doing that [you’re] thinking about something that’s more reflexive rather than just doing it.”

EVERYONE HAD an idea of how to fix Joel Stave. His parents, Barb and Karl, got letters saying, “Hang in there” or “Read this Internet post about Chuck Knoblauch.” The football department received emails from fans, suggestions addressed to the offensive coordinator. Stave himself got emails. One advised him to throw with a bag over his head. Another recommended passing with only one eye open.

A few teammates urged Stave to see a psychologist. He never seriously considered it. “It was a good thing I was taking 17 credits,” says Stave, a civil engineering major. “I was going to class and doing homework. I could get my mind off it when I was focusing on something else.” Over the month that he could not accurately throw a football, he didn’t fall into a depression and never considered quitting, but he did isolate himself because, he says, “to talk about it was to make it more real, and I didn’t want it to seem real.” The closest he came to therapy was disappearing into the music department building, where he’d lock himself in an empty practice room for an hour or two and play the piano.

“I would come in [to the football facility] on Sundays when no one was around, and I would grab a ball and just throw it at blocking dummies,” Stave says. “It felt normal, but I’d get out to practice and I’d start thinking again, and it just felt off.” After every practice Frederick would stick around, and the two would throw “like we were in a backyard.” If you walked by the facility at night, you could hear a voice booming: “What the hell? Millions of people in the state of Wisconsin, and I’m the second-best quarterback *here!*”

JOEL
STAVE



Stave got emails
from strangers.
*One advised
him to throw
footballs
with a bag
over his head.*
Another suggested
throwing with only
one eye open.



IT PROBABLY doesn’t help also that fans here have been watching [the Packers’] Brett Favre and Aaron Rodgers for the last two decades,” says former Badgers tight end Sam Arneson. “I think that contributes to the scrutiny—and the criticism—Joel gets.” There’s also the pressure that naturally accompanies being the starting quarterback at a big-time college program, and Madison, of course, is no different from any Big Ten town: Football is a way of life, and the standards are high. When Russell Wilson transferred to Wisconsin from North Carolina State in summer 2011 and shattered the team record for touchdowns, set the single-season FBS record for pass efficiency and led the Badgers to an 11–3 record and a conference championship, the bar was raised even higher.

“No one’s harder on me than myself,” says Stave. “Football has always been so important to me. But to get through this, I think it was really about caring less.”



Check out the SI
College Football
podcast with Zac
Ellis each week at
SI.com/podcasts

JOE ROBBINS/GETTY IMAGES

Had Stave come to him, Lardon would have had him start with the long passes that he could effectively release, then work down to the 10-yard outs. “Incrementally add the pieces back in,” says Lardon. “Slowly, bit by bit, build yourself back. If you’re caring too much about that perfect pass, or that scouts are here, well that’s not going to help. Care just about the fundamentals that the coach has been teaching you since you were 12 years old.”

That is essentially what Stave did. “I would force myself to not think negatively,” he says. “Really, it’s simple as telling yourself this: Look out at the defense. See the defense. Find the window. Put it in there, just like you’ve done your entire life. And just have a little fun with it too.” During one workout late last September, after throwing a few balls in a warmup, he tapped the shoulder of his coordinator as if to say, *Yeah, that’s right. I can complete three 10-yard passes in a row.* This was before the fourth game of the year, against South Florida, and Stave had a feeling he had yet to experience that season: *If I played today, I would be all right.*

The following week, before a game at Northwestern, Stave was back to practicing full-time, as the backup. Midway through the second quarter, with McEvoy ineffective after four series, Stave grabbed his helmet and went back on the field. On the surface Stave’s return was a failure: He finished 8 of 19 for 114 yards with a touchdown and threw three interceptions, including an ill-advised fourth-quarter pass on first-and-goal from the three in an eventual 20–14 loss. But in reality the performance was one of the quiet triumphs of the 2014 college football season: There were no wayward heaves, no moments of panic, no evidence that this was the football player who had fallen further than any other. Joel Stave was once again just another college quarterback.

STAVE KNOWS this is the unsatisfying part of his story, that even now he can’t explain why his ailment came and went, a football mystery with few answers. Yet it did prove instructive. “If I had let [the yips] win, that would be something I’d never be able to forgive myself for,” he says. “Looking back, I’m almost glad I went through it. Knowing that I could get through something as bad as that was, it’s made me tougher.”

It is an August afternoon, and Stave is sitting in a room high above Camp Randall Stadium after a morning practice. Last year, after the Northwestern

YIPS THROUGH THE YEARS



STEVE BLASS

The Pirates’ ace, who suddenly couldn’t throw strikes in 1973, even tried pitching from his knees.

JOHNNY MILLER

In the late ’70s, short putts became a big problem; closing his eyes didn’t help to solve it.

STEVE SAX

When the Dodger’s wild throws from second began in ’83, fans behind first put on batting helmets.



BERNHARD LANGER

His struggles culminated with a missed six-footer on the final hole at the ’91 Ryder Cup (above).

CHUCK KNOBLAUCH

The Yankees’ second baseman’s misfire on a routine play to first in 2000 hit Keith Olbermann’s mom in the face.

ANA IVANOVIC

After winning the ’08 French Open, she struggled with her service toss, plummeting to No. 65 in ’10.

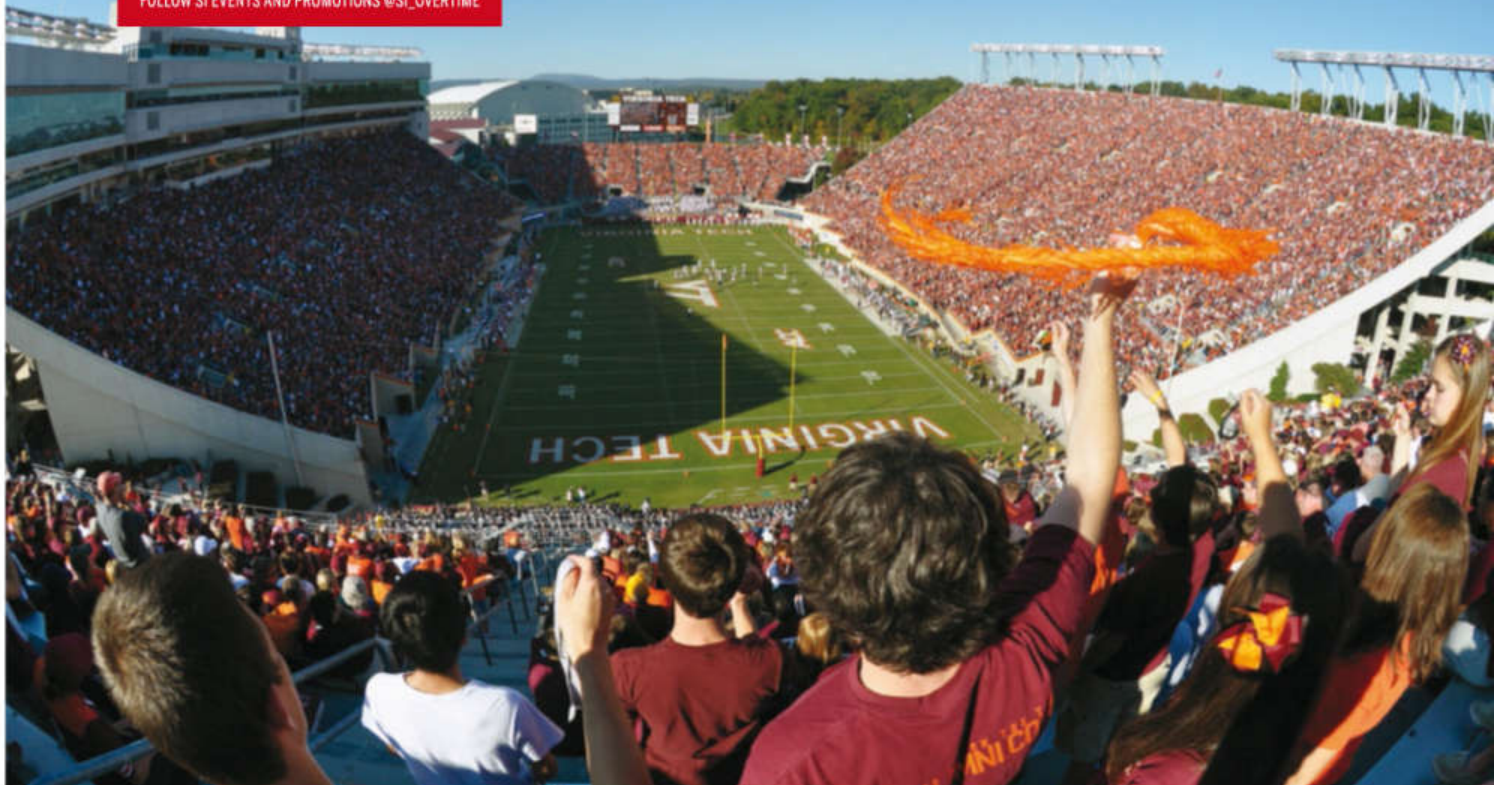
loss, Stave took over as the starter and led Wisconsin to seven straight wins, including back-to-back victories at Iowa and against Minnesota that clinched the Big Ten West Division title. Although the Badgers fell to Ohio State 59–0 in the conference championship, they rallied to take down Auburn 34–31 in the Outback Bowl. Stave completed 53.4% of his throws in 2014, with nine touchdowns and 10 picks. This off-season, even with a new coach—Andersen left for Oregon State—there was no quarterback controversy in Madison: Stave will be the starter for the Badgers, who open against No. 3 Alabama this Saturday in Arlington, Texas, the biggest game of college football’s opening week. (McEvoy has been moved to wide receiver and safety.)

“This summer we sat down for the first time,” says coach Paul Chryst, a former Wisconsin quarterback and offensive coordinator who returned after three years in charge at Pitt. “And of course I cut to it—let’s talk about the elephant in the room. He wasn’t lying down on the couch; I just wanted to see where he was at. He said he was in a good place, and that’s all I had to hear.”

“He’s a different person,” says Frederick. “With the things he’s gone through, he’s much more confident with the team. He’s a man of the team, and we’ve rallied around him.”

Late last September, around the time when he had fallen into the darkest place, Stave sat in a room with teammates listening to former Badgers great Don Davey, a defensive tackle who, after years dealing with debilitating football injuries, has in his late 40s become a world-class triathlete. Says Stave, “There’s a quote that he said that really resonated: ‘It’s amazing what the body can do if the mind will let it.’ He was saying, If you’re mentally feeling good and confident, you feel you can do anything. This was when I was going through my stuff, and I was thinking, Man, there’s the other side too. If you’re not feeling good, it’s just the opposite. It’s so true with sports. It’s sick how mental it is.”

Joel Stave feels good. □



2015 SI TAILGATE TOUR |||||

KICKOFF

|||||

Look for this year's tour at some of the biggest games on the college football calendar.

|||||

THE WAIT IS OVER: College football is back. Fans across the country have spent months eagerly anticipating kickoff weekend, getting their jerseys ready for the stadium and their grills ready for the parking lot. But before you trot out those same old recipes and toss around that scuffed-up football, take a look around the lot—you may just spot the *Sports Illustrated* Tailgate Tour 2015, presented by Go RVing.

This year, the Tailgate Tour will again take the ultimate fan experience on the road to some of the most legendary college football locales around. From Hollywood to StarkVegas to Toomer's Corner, SI will be bringing the party to a stadium near you to

make sure every pregame is packed with fun.

The tour starts with an out-of-conference showdown between the Virginia Tech Hokies and the reigning national champion Ohio State Buckeyes. Last year, SI and Go RVing were on hand in Columbus to see the Hokies hand the eventual champs their only loss of the season, a stunning 35-21 upset that had major implications once the playoffs rolled around. This year, the Tailgate Tour heads to Blacksburg for the rematch, as the Buckeyes look to avenge the one black mark on their dream 2014 season.

Next, the Tailgate Tour rolls into East Lansing, Mich., for a rematch of 2014's early-season thriller between the Michigan State

The Tailgate Tour will be packed with activities, interactive experiences, food and fun.



UPCOMING SCHEDULE

9/7 | OHIO STATE BUCKEYES
@ VIRGINIA TECH HOKIES IN
BLACKSBURG, VA.

9/12 | OREGON DUCKS @
MICHIGAN STATE SPARTANS IN
EAST LANSING, MICH.

9/26 | UTAH UTES @ OREGON
DUCKS IN EUGENE, ORE.

Spartans and the Oregon Ducks. Last year in Eugene, the Ducks' offense proved too powerful for the Spartans' shutdown defense, as Oregon blitzed MSU 46-27 en route to a title game loss to Ohio State. The Ducks shouldn't expect another cakewalk at Spartan Stadium, where MSU went 7-1 last year before winning the Cotton Bowl.

Each tour stop will include an appearance and chalk talk with a college football legend, with a chance for autographs and a meet-and-greet. Local chefs will demonstrate their best tailgating recipes, with plenty of free samples for hungry fans. Toss a few beanbags at our cornhole tournaments, or test your skills in our Virtual Quarterback simulator. There will be

giveaways aplenty, including free Tailgate Tour apparel, plus special appearances by SI writers and personalities.

During the week, check out the Tailgate Tour hub at SI.com/TailgateTour for exclusive college football content, including rivalry recaps, profiles of quintessential college hot spots and deep dives on team traditions. On game day, stop by the Tailgate Tour tent to have your picture taken on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, tour two state-of-the-art RVs or enter the Tailgate Tour sweepstakes for your chance to win your own ultimate tailgating experience from Go RVing. You've waited this long for college football to come back—make sure you do game day the right way.

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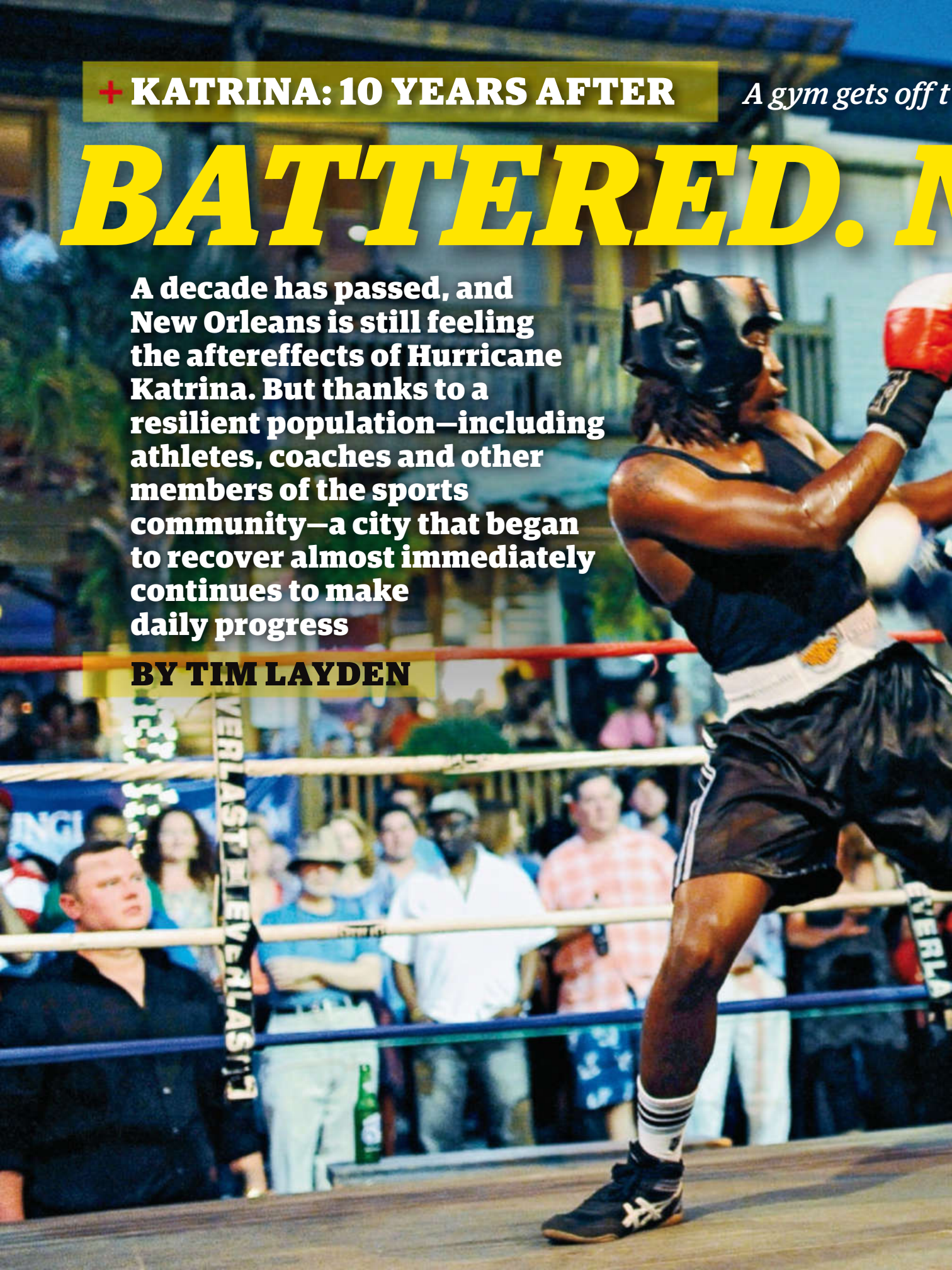
+ KATRINA: 10 YEARS AFTER

A gym gets off t

BATTERED. N

A decade has passed, and New Orleans is still feeling the aftereffects of Hurricane Katrina. But thanks to a resilient population—including athletes, coaches and other members of the sports community—a city that began to recover almost immediately continues to make daily progress

BY TIM LAYDEN



he mat / An NBA star finds a calling / Tulane's goal line stand

NOT BEATEN



THE BIG SHOW

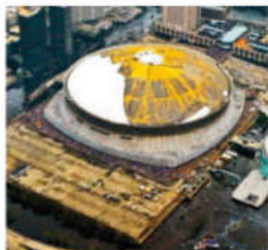
Friday Night Fights' outdoor events feature singers, dancers and beauty contests as well as boxing—a NOLA feast.

Photograph by Cheryl Gerber

TEN YEARS have passed since the wind blew and the waters rose in New Orleans. Ten years since lives were lost and others irretrievably changed. Ten years since a nation watched as a great and beloved city was battered by the random cruelty of nature and the inexcusable incompetence of government. Ten years since Katrina entered the lexicon of American culture, a symbol of pain, sadness and devastation, yet also of courage, strength and perseverance.

The storm crashed ashore in the early morning of Aug. 29, 2005, submerging much of New Orleans in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Pontchartrain. Drew Brees was 1,600 miles away, participating in his fifth training camp with the Chargers, his third as the starting quarterback for the franchise that drafted him in 2001. He watched on television like so many others, unaware that one day post-Katrina New Orleans would be a part of his life and he would be a part of its life.

Doug Thornton, a former quarterback at McNeese State who had lived in New Orleans since 1984, was at the Superdome, where he was the building's chief executive as a regional vice president for the management company SMG. The building was already filling with residents seeking shelter. Water was lapping at its walls.



Wayne Reese was getting his football team ready at McDonogh 35, a high school in the Seventh Ward. Reese had spent 53 of his 60 years in New Orleans and had lived through Hurricane Camille in 1969.

Very few U.S. cities have faced in modern times what New Orleans did in that late summer of 2005 and in the decade since. San Francisco in 1989, perhaps. New York City in 2001, certainly. Tragedy of such horrific scope is blessedly rare. New Orleans continues to slowly recover, a smaller city and a different city. There are still lines of discoloration on many buildings, silent reminders of how high the floodwaters rose. Sports have been a part of that recovery. Teams, players, buildings. Sports have helped New Orleans as they help us every day.

BETWEEN ITS OPENING in August 1975 and the arrival of Katrina, the Superdome had been not just the dominant feature of the New Orleans skyline but also a vital part of U.S. sports culture. It had hosted six Super Bowls and four Final Fours. Michael Jordan beat Georgetown here, and Chris Webber called a timeout he didn't

Answering the Bell

In a thriving gym and in festive open-air fights, the spirit of a city that always had a puncher's chance is on full display



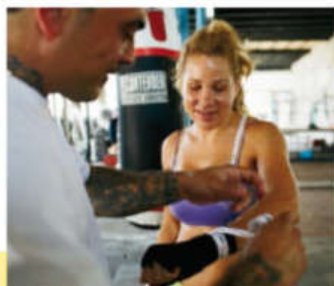
DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP (SPURER BOWL); WILL WIDMER FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (2)

+ BY RICHARD O'BRIEN



RING LEADER

When Tata (left) brought back his gym, he aided a civic recovery and gave a home to displaced fighters like Junot (right).



A COUPLE OF YEARS back, when he was in New Orleans filming the boxing comedy *Grudge Match*, Sylvester Stallone came to the Friday Night Fights Gym. He was looking for a gritty, “authentic” location, and Mike Tata’s Central City setup, with its concrete floor, peeling walls and tattered ring, fit the bill. “He shot here some,” says Tata. “But then

he wanted to lower the speed bag on the wall so he could reach it better. I told him to stand on a box like everybody else.”

That was the last Tata saw of Stallone. But now, in a showbiz twist of his own, the 53-year-old Tata is pitching a reality series centered on his gym and the semiregular outdoor boxing shows he stages. Tata’s is a suitably Rockyesque, up-from-the-canvas saga. It’s also one tied from the beginning into the singular rhythms and resilience of New Orleans.

Owner of a gym in New York City for seven years, Tata bailed on Manhattan’s soaring rents and moved to New Orleans in 2003.

(“I’d heard there was only one other place in the country as unique and interesting [as New York],” he says.) He opened his first gym there, on then largely dilapidated Freret Street in the Uptown section, in January 2005. “Eight months before Katrina,” he says. Forced to evacuate after the storm, Tata never considered throwing in the towel. “We were the first commercial business to reopen on the street,” he says. “I knew people wanted to keep punching.”

In the decade since—even as Tata was forced three years ago to relocate to his current spot, not by rising water but by rising rents along the newly fashionable Freret—several more boxing gyms have opened in New Orleans, from Tremé to the Lower Ninth Ward, revitalizing a sport that had all but disappeared from the city.

For now, though, Friday Night Fights’ quarterly card remains the showcase event. Each of these only-in-NOLA extravaganzas—think Mardi Gras meets *The Contender*—features eight bouts sanctioned by USA Boxing, held in a ring set up outdoors just off St. Charles Avenue. Crowds of more than 1,000 BYOB-fueled fans are also treated to between-fight entertainment from singers, rappers, burlesque dancers

and drag performers. There’s always a beauty contest too, open to women and men.

“There are two kinds of people who come,” Tata says. “Those who want to watch the show and those who want to be part of the show.”

That, of course, applies to a lot of New Orleans action. On a recent sweltering afternoon in the Friday Night Fights Gym, though, the focus was clearly on doing, not watching. There was 22-year-old middleweight Asani Woods, preparing for an amateur card out of town; there was 28-year-old Wayne Banks, newly released after 13 years in prison, who said he was “just trying to get my body back”; and there was 33-year-old criminal defense attorney Bobby Hjortsberg, a Friday Night Fights Gym veteran. Up in the ring former WBC super welterweight champion Tiffany Junot worked the mitts with trainer Aaron Navaro. Born and raised in the Algiers Point neighborhood, Junot, 36, had to train in Houston after the storm. The pro scene there was strong but, she said between rounds, “I couldn’t wait to get home.”

Looking around the gym, she added, “There’s so much desire here, so much strength.”



RISING AGAIN

For more on Tiffany Junot, along with five other video stories on post-Katrina New Orleans, go to **Time.com/NEW-ORLEANS-HERE-AND-NOW**

TEN YEARS AFTER KATRINA

have. Roberto Durán said *no más*. Every year it was the site of the Sugar Bowl, and sometimes a college football national championship game.

So it was that Americans saw this place for games turned into the symbol of Katrina's suffering. Thornton stayed at the Superdome for five days before leaving by helicopter as the evacuation of the building finally began on Sept. 1. A decade later he is an executive vice president at SMG. He works every day in the Superdome, both proud of its survival and haunted by its memories.

"Some days I'll be walking around when it's empty, and I'll look at some area and I can see the people who were living there," Thornton said last week, sitting in a concourse-level conference room. There is an elevator vestibule on the 100 level; Thornton can picture the older woman who sat there for three days with her back to two walls for safety. On the fourth day she was gone.

When Thornton hears a helicopter, he remembers the unceasing chopper roar. "One day I saw a mother and two young girls jump off the helicopter, nothing but the clothes on their backs," he said. "And the father was on a gurney, with all sorts of tubes hooked up." He paused to collect his emotions. "I don't know what happened to any of those people," Thornton said. And he can't forget the smell, of human beings and mold and waste.

But the Dome's rebirth became a symbol of New Orleans's recovery. At the urging of then NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue and at a cost of nearly \$200 million, the building

was readied for the Saints' 2006 home opener, on Monday night, Sept. 25. A team that had been forced to split its home schedule the previous season between New Jersey, San Antonio and LSU's Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge returned home to defeat the Falcons. It was the Saints' third consecutive victory in a remarkable season that wouldn't end until they lost the NFC championship game in Chicago. Their quarterback was Drew Brees.

HIS 36 now, the father of three sons and a daughter, about to begin his 10th season as quarterback of the Saints—a one-team tenure currently exceeded only by Tom Brady's with the Patriots (14) and Eli Manning's with the Giants (11). Since Brees and coach Sean Payton arrived, the Saints have gone 93–61, including the postseason, and won the franchise's only Super Bowl,

Playground Legend

Touched by the rebuilding effort in New Orleans, a former NBA star has spread that charitable spirit around the nation



BILL HABER/AP (Brees); ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES (AMISON); RAY AMAT/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES (STERN, SILVER); COURTESY OF KAROOMI (OBAMA)

+ BY DAN GREENE



SERIOUS PLAYERS

After his work with other NBA luminaries in New Orleans in 2008 (left and below), Jamison helped the first lady build a play space in Washington (right).



THE HOST CITY of the 2008 NBA All-Star Game held deep meaning for Antawn Jamison. The veteran power forward, then an All-Star for the second time for the Wizards, had made regular trips to New Orleans from Shreveport, La., where he lived until his family

moved to Charlotte when he was 13. What's more, his parents were vacationing there when Hurricane Katrina struck: For two days they holed up in a powerless hotel without a working cellphone, sleeping with the door open to alleviate the heat, before a good Samaritan offered them a ride to find shelter in Houston. Two and a half years later, as Jamison's parents joined him in New Orleans for the All-Star festivities, they regaled their son with somber tales of what they had seen and what was no longer there.

The city soon gained in significance for Jamison. On the Friday of All-Star Weekend, he was one of 15 current and former NBA and

WNBA players to help build a playground in the Central City neighborhood as part of a partnership between NBA Cares and KaBOOM!, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting children's play. Under a steady rain Jamison and his colleagues assisted an army of volunteers, screwing together slides and assembling monkey bars. After five hours of work, a full playground stood where an empty lot had been. As he surveyed the children beaming at their neighborhood's new attraction—a far cry from the distraught, devastated New Orleans images he recalled from just a few years earlier—Jamison was filled with hope. “We all knew just one weekend of NBA players and entertainers wasn't going to make everything right,” he says, “but it could be a nice distraction.”

KaBOOM!'s core philosophy—that play is central to children's development and mental health—struck a chord with Jamison. “We're in a society where kids don't really get the opportunity to be kids anymore,” he says, citing the prevalence of indoor activities like video games and many cities' lack of quality recreational spaces. During his childhood in Shreveport, Jamison took refuge from gangs

and other trouble at the playground on the end of his street. “I couldn't imagine not having that outlet,” he says.

And so Jamison went about making sure his work with KaBOOM! was more than a one-off. That fall he funded his own playground construction project in Bossier City, just outside Shreveport, where most of his family still lives. In the summer of 2009 he built another playground in his second home city of Charlotte. (His father's construction company relocated him there to assist in the Hurricane Hugo rebuild.) Then, in 2011, Jamison participated in KaBOOM!'s 15th-anniversary build in Washington, alongside Michelle Obama.

Now working as a Lakers TV broadcaster, Jamison, 39, continues to serve as a KaBOOM! spokesman. Even if he has yet to grow fond of lugging mulch (“Man, that does something different to your body,” he laments), he says their collaboration will continue until either he or the group is no more. “When I got off that bus [in New Orleans] and saw we were about to build a playground, I never expected that I would have this relationship,” he says. “Life has a funny way of connecting people and figuring things out.”

“I never expected that I would have this relationship,” Jamison says. “Life has a funny way of connecting people and figuring things out.”

TEN YEARS AFTER KATRINA

after the 2009 season. Much more important, the team—always beloved, even as a perennial loser—became a symbol of hope and fortitude.

To this day Brees is humbled and vaguely overwhelmed by the emotions—devastation, loss, survival, rebirth—that still hang heavy in the city. “To be honest, even now I’m not sure I realized what I was signing on for,” he says. “I’m not sure I understood what the city had been through.” He had suffered a severe shoulder injury in the last game of the 2005 season, and it was uncertain if he would be an effective player again. The Saints were the only team to offer him a free-agent contract. An orphaned city welcomed a quarterback abandoned by the rest of the NFL, even

as Saints ownership considered leaving the city permanently.

“The confidence of these people empowered me,” says Brees. “We were all in uncharted territory. Now I still see people every day who say, ‘Thank

you for coming here. We love the Saints.’ I’m so thankful that I had the opportunity to come here, too, so thankful to New Orleans.”



WAYNE REESE became a high school football coach 43 years ago. His best pupil was Marshall Faulk, the Hall of Fame running back whom he coached at Carver High in the Ninth Ward. Katrina devastated the already struggling New Orleans public school system and the athletic programs that went with it. Slowly, those programs have fought back.

“After the storm,” says Reese, “we lost a lot of kids who were real good players. Their families left the city, or some other football programs in other parts of the state found a way to adopt the players. That happened a lot. They took a lot of the good ones.”

The population of New Orleans was just under 500,000 before Katrina, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau it is now 384,320. But the exodus has reversed. Reese sees the effects. “This year,” he says, “I’ve got five kids who are as good as anybody in the country. We haven’t had that since before the storm.”

History will show that the waters thrown upon New Orleans by Katrina receded in the days and weeks after the storm made landfall. But true recovery has taken much longer. Sports offered its hand to the city, and the city reached for it. It was not enough for rebirth, but enough for hope. □

Honor Students

In a season of untold hardship, Tulane's football players stayed true to their school and helped rebuild their city



KIRBY LEE/WIREIMAGE.COM (SIGN); RICK GERSHON/THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/AP (PRACTICE); RICK HAYE/ICON SPORTSWIRE (PORTE); AMY K. NELSON FOR THE MMQB (CRUTCHFIELD)



THE **MMQB** /// PARADISE LOST

Ten years ago, Port Sulphur football coach Cyril Crutchfield nearly drowned in his small-town Louisiana high school gym after misjudging the power of Hurricane Katrina. In the days and years after the storm, Crutchfield helped rebuild the town and the team; in 2007, Crutchfield's team won the first of two straight state titles. But a controversy in '10 resulted in Crutchfield leaving the school, and a decade later the town he left and the people who once needed him most are asking whether he can ever come back. Amy K. Nelson tells Crutchfield's story of post-Katrina rejuvenation and rejection in a video at TheMMQB.com.

+ BY JOAN NIESEN



ON SEPT. 30, 2005, a charter bus rolled down the near-deserted stretch of I-10 that ran through New Orleans. Thirty-two days after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, the city was still populated



NO QUIT

Forte (25) and the Wave (left) practiced in Dallas two days after Katrina.

mostly by aid workers and stubborn holdouts, and as Tulane's football players traveled to their makeshift team hotel—a banquet room at English Turn Golf & Country Club—what they saw out the window was a gut punch. It was the first time most of them had returned since the storm, and the city looked as if it had been turned over and violently shaken.

Quarterback Lester Ricard remembers his teammates' blank stares during the drive. "You see Humvees and the Army Corps of Engineers and military guys," Ricard says. "It's like, Where are we? It's a broken, Third World country. It was heartbreaking to see—like we'll never come back to New Orleans again."

At the time, the Green Wave was 1–1. The team was housed in a condemned dorm at Louisiana Tech in Ruston (Tulane's campus had been closed for the fall semester) and was slated to play all its games on the road. It would win the next day, against Southern Louisiana at LSU's Tiger Stadium, and afterward coach Chris Scelfo would allow his players to scatter until Tuesday, as was the custom that season. Many players from the New Orleans area used their time off to return home and see the wreckage up close. The Green Wave would not win again; they finished the season 2–9.

When Tulane players enrolled for the spring semester, much of New Orleans was still empty. Still, only three players transferred after Katrina. "We weren't going to run away," says Bears running back Matt Forte, a sophomore on the '05 team, "not because a hurricane or a storm shook us up."

The team spent that spring without facilities as Tulane renovated its waterlogged campus. Some players had lost everything they owned. Instead of dwelling on their hardships, though, they rebuilt, working with relief groups to bring their city back. "There was

always something going on where you could help someone out," offensive lineman Mike Parenton says. "It never was that you were just isolated and the world is crashing in."

In November, Tulane will induct its athletes from the 2005–06 season into the school's Hall of Fame, honoring the sacrifices they made 10 years ago. The '05 football team, which had three players (Forte, offensive tackle Troy Kropog and linebacker Anthony Cannon) who went on to the NFL, still has myriad ties to New Orleans. Many alumni have homes there. Forte holds annual camps in the area. Parenton is a scout for the Saints. Ricard is a coach and teacher at Hahnville High, about 10 miles west of the city. Israel Route, a cornerback from Stone Mountain, Ga., remains in New Orleans and works for Tulane, commuting past houses he and his teammates renovated a decade ago.

Asked whether they'd do it all over again—the homelessness, the uncertainty, the 2–9 season—the players agree almost to a man: They would, without question. Football kept them sane amid the chaos, and the chaos made them the men they are today. "After that," receiver Brian King says, "I can take on anything." □



Remember Their Names

→ BY MICHAEL ROSENBERG

ONE OF THESE DAYS a quarterback will step to the line of scrimmage, then call timeout to talk about his legacy. This will only improve the television ratings. If there is one topic we enjoy discussing these days, it is legacies.

A legacy is “something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past,” according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, which itself was transmitted by brothers George and Charles Merriam. They published the work of Noah Webster in the 19th century; you can read more about it on their website, under the headline MERRIAM-WEBSTER CONTINUES NOAH WEBSTER’S LEGACY.

Webster officially defined *legacy*, but now we redefine it all the time. You no longer have to be from the past to have a legacy. You don’t have to be an all-time great. You don’t even have to be first-team All-NBA. Consider the case of LaMarcus Aldridge, who left the Trail Blazers as a free agent this summer. *USA Today* opined that “Aldridge blazed a different trail and left a complicated and confusing legacy behind.” An *Oregonian* columnist blamed Portland general manager Neil Olshey for alienating Aldridge, saying Olshey was “eager to make his [own] draft picks shine, cementing his legacy.” And after Aldridge signed with San Antonio, a cbssports.com headline declared, **POPOVICH, SPURS KEEP LEGACY ALIVE.**

There are many ways to create a legacy, but from what I have read, they all involve cement. Legacies are always cemented. They are never glued, sewn on, hooked together or fired in a kiln. If any of you figures out how to Velcro a legacy, that will be your legacy.

We are told that Peyton Manning needs to win a championship in Denver to cement his legacy, and LeBron James needs to win one in Cleveland to cement his. In the sports discussion, as on our sidewalks, some cement lasts longer than others. Tom Brady cemented his legacy with his fourth Super Bowl win in February, but some now wonder whether Deflategate has cracked it.

James recently said his “legacy will speak for itself,” but Michael Jordan’s legacy doesn’t want to hear it. That’s O.K. James’s former Miami teammate, Dwyane Wade, isn’t too worried about Jordan’s legacy. As Wade told *Esquire* after he left

Our nation’s
legacy
factory
never
closes. It
churns out
one
legacy
after
another,
sometimes
bestowing
them upon
the most
unlikely
people.


Is there too
much legacy
talk?
Join the
discussion on
Twitter by
using
#SIPointAfter
and following
@Rosenberg_Mike

Nike’s Jordan brand in 2012, “I’m just trying to do what he did, building my own brand with my legacy.”

Sometimes great players leave a legacy, though in the case of Alex Rodriguez, this is considered littering. Or it was. Now A-Rod is back, smashing home runs for the Yankees, and this alters his legacy because he is not on steroids anymore, unless he is.

Collectively, we have spent years debating Tiger Woods’s legacy: Will he be remembered as a great golfer, or as the greatest golfer? The debate is heated. You can think about this while playing *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13*, a video game that allows you to relive the biggest moments of Woods’s golfing life in The Tiger Legacy Challenge.

Our nation’s legacy factory never closes. It churns out one legacy after another, sometimes bestowing them upon the most unlikely people. I never heard anybody discuss golfer Zach Johnson’s legacy before this summer’s British Open. But when Johnson won the British, his second major championship, he was handed the Claret Jug on the course and a legacy in the ensuing press conference. He kept only the Jug, saying that the championship “is not my legacy. . . . I’m going to savor this. I’m humbled by this. But my legacy should be my kids, my family.”

That’s a noble thought, but Johnson should understand: *We* will decide how important his kids are, thank you very much. That’s the root of our obsession with legacies. They empower us to decide what’s important.

Championships are decided in competition, but legacies are determined in our minds. By talking so much about legacies, we are saying that what people do does not matter as much as what we think of it. It’s like everybody in America is a sports columnist. This makes it very hard for me to cement my legacy. □



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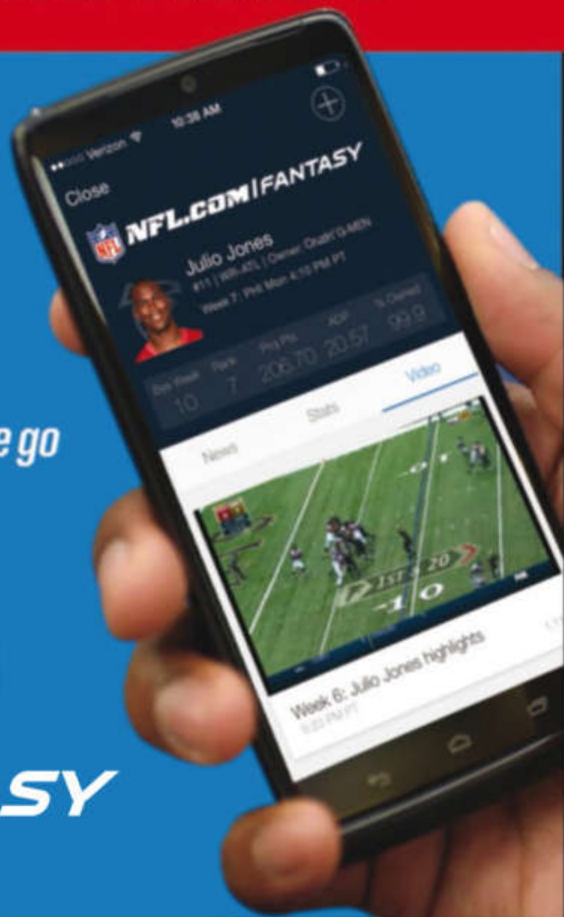
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